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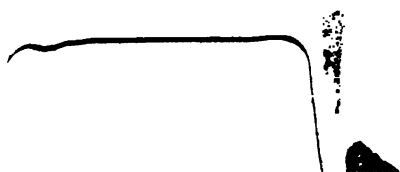
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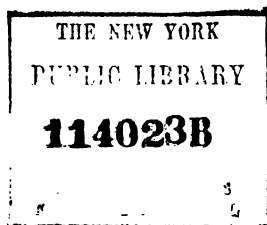
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To J. R. H.

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THE REVOLT OF A DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARCHESA RETURNS.

THE Marchesa Bertini, in her plain, black silk gown and lace fichu, and on her dark brown hair the square of lace which suggested a widow's cap, was receiving visitors at her old home, "Waldstein," after twenty-two years of absence in Europe. The marchesa had her own delightful way of doing everything, and in making tea her manner was to sit before the samovar, holding a cup in her left hand while her right was extended in greeting to the last comer to whom she listened, asking all sorts of questions, regaling him or her in turn with an account of herself. If she found a moment to pour out the tea, she was certain to make such long pauses between the samovar and the teapot, the lemon and the sugar, that any one athirst would have fainted in sight of the promised land, and, even in gaining it, would have been likely to find the cheering cup rather cold. Caterina Bertini, a girl of eighteen, stood beside her mother, and it was she who effectively provided refreshment for the callers, while with mischievous strata-

gem she permitted the marchesa to believe that she herself was promptly dispensing hospitality in the *mêlée*, where talk was warm and greetings were many.

For it was a gathering of the clan. All the Amorys, Darrows, and Amburys for miles about had come to greet Constance Bertini, for even to those who had not known her in her youth she was a family tradition. She had married her second cousin, Philip Amory, at the age of nineteen. He had died in Rome while they were on their wedding journey, and at the same time Constance's father at home had died. She had been motherless from her early childhood, and this absence of close ties was perhaps sufficient to account for the young widow's staying on in Europe, instead of returning to her own country. That she should prefer to do so instead of coming back to her relatives had been the subject of long and animated discussion and inexhaustible conjecture among the two families of Amorys. When, however, eighteen months after Philip's death, Constance suddenly announced the fact that she was to be quietly married to the Marchese Francesco Bertini, the family comments on the young girl's crude self-confidence were changed into admiring appreciation. Her brothers, her sister, half a dozen brothers- and sisters-in-law, to say nothing of scores of aunts, uncles, and cousins, confessed to each other that they experienced a relief. Instead of being a puzzling and unaccountable creature, Constance had reinstated



herself in everybody's eyes as a charming, sensible woman who knew how to use her advantages.

Little had been known about this second marriage, except that Bertini was a man of double her age with no estate to back his title, but holding a position under government, which enabled him at once to earn a certain income and pursue congenial archæological researches. When Constance had been his wife five years, Bertini too died, leaving her a widow for the second time with a little girl of three. Even now she was but twenty-six or seven years of age, but still she stayed on in Europe. After this second widowhood, however, no one thought of suggesting what course she ought to pursue. There was hardly a limit to the delicacy with which the private personal wishes of a marchesa should be regarded. But after her strange fluctuating experience Constance had bought a small villa not far from Florence, and had lived there quietly until now when her eldest brother, the inheritor of the family place, had entreated her to come back and see her home and friends once more.

Constance as a girl had been very beautiful, and although she was now a little past forty, she seemed to those who had known her in her youth to have lost little or nothing of her early beauty, and even to have gained charm. Her hair and eyes were brown; her forehead was low, very wide and full. Her features were well moulded; her mouth beautiful for twenty different reasons. If she had less

than her old, vivid color, her tints seemed all the better to suit the black and white of her dress. But it had always been ^{that} in her manner there lay her supreme effectiveness. If she had gained distinction, there was still the same absolute simplicity, the same sincerity and sweetness, all expressing that rare and perfect mental poise which at its final test proves generally to be the absolute good sense which ought to enable its possessor to make the most of life. Had Constance made the most of hers?

More than half the visitors to-day were entitled to call her Constance, but she said to some one who tripped in addressing her, "Pray, call me Mrs. Bertini. I care so little about the title. My husband quite rejected it for himself, and was simply 'doctor.' *Il marchese* meant nothing; nothing at all in this generation. And now when I have come back, it seems so un-American I prefer to drop it altogether."

"Don't drop it for the world, aunt Constance," said Mrs. Darrow Amory. "It was so charming to-day to tell people we were driving out to call on the marchesa."

"Most of us call you Conny Amory still," said Ambury Darrow.

Constance laughed, and told of going after her second marriage to pay a visit to some English friends living in Rome, who had brought their own butler, a solid, severe-looking man, who had seen her once or twice as a widow. The *portinaro* had

called her name up the staircase "La Signora Marchesa Bertini." The butler had gazed at her for an instant as if stupefied, then had announced "The late Mrs. Philip Amory."

The marchesa (for so we ought, perhaps, to call her for a page or two until we are more intimately acquainted) constantly introduced her daughter to all her friends and relatives, saying, —

"This is my little girl, Kitty, short for Caterina. She was named for my husband's mother."

Then Kitty, who watched her mother's every movement, and listened to her every word with radiant satisfaction, would exclaim eagerly, —

"Did you know mamma? Ah, I am so jealous of all the people here who knew mamma before I was born! Was she lovely then? I am sure she could not have been so lovely as she is now."

Mother and daughter set each other off, and played the part of foils. Kitty looked sixteen rather than eighteen. She was tall, with an undeveloped figure, and a slight tendency to stoop when she stood and sat. Her long thin arms hung straight down by her sides when not in play; her hands were thin, brown, and, apt as they were to be a little scratched and the nails clipped, were not beautiful. But Kitty in repose and Kitty in motion were two different persons. She was nimble as a monkey, and the moment she moved, her figure, slender to meagreness although it was, took on attitudes full of a weird foreign grace. She startled, surprised, and charmed. If her complexion was dark, her features

were strikingly good, and it needed but one flash from her eyes to show that they at least were not only beautiful, but so amazingly keen that they altered the whole expression of her personality. More than one of the family friends to-day who took the little hand in his, and began to utter some conventional greeting, was robbed of self-possession when Kitty turned the illumination of her glance and smile upon him. She was dressed in a frock of white mull with a fall of very fine embroidery from the high throat. Her magnificent braids reached below her waist, and were fastened together by a silver arrow studded with small brilliants.

"This is my little girl, Kitty," the marchesa said to Ambury Darrow's tall, handsome, blonde daughters. "Kitty, dear, these are your cousins, the Misses Darrow. I hope they will take a fancy to you, and be good to you."

"I am Gatty," said the youngest and prettiest Miss Darrow.

"I am Milly," said the second.

"I am Sue," said the eldest.

Kitty stood a little alien, a little aloof, gazing at first one, and then the other of the three young women. They looked to her so consummately adult, so superabundantly large, so radiantly fair as to be overwhelming.

"Let me remember," she said in her clear, deliberate speech. "This is Gat-ti."

"Short for Agatha, you know."

"Ah, yes, Gat-ti, short for Agatha. This is Mil-li."

"Milly, short for Millicent."

"And this is" —

"S-u-e, Sue. Short for Susan. I detest the name."

"Sue." Kitty smiled. "And you are all my cousins?"

"Second cousins removed. Poppa is first cousin to the marchesa. We are actually only third cousins. You need not feel oppressed by the relationship. I do not consider that anything except first cousins count," Gatty explained.

"I was brought up to love all my American cousins," said Kitty.

"Ah, one may love people three thousand miles away."

"I shall love you," said Kitty, with a little nod.

"I admire you all immensely."

"That's frank at least. I only hope it's honest."

"So beautiful, so blonde, — so different, so American."

"You don't like anything American, I suppose?"

"I adore it. I want to be American — to my finger tips."

"You had better give it up then as a bad job," said Gatty, laughing, "for you are Italian from head to foot."

Kitty laughed gleefully, and made a gesture with both hands.

"I am not an Italian at all. In Italy they say that I am a veritable American."

Kitty was deeply interested in this assemblage of her mother's old friends, — even, as she had said, a little jealous. The marchesa had guarded her strangeness; in Italy they had lived on terms of high ceremony even with Kitty's connections on her father's side. Here there was such easy intimacy, such a habit of absolute candor, so many allusions to the past, such imperative questions, such unfaltering answers, the young girl was all alert. Gatty was the first relative she had met about whom she was curious for her own sake. Most girls see in each new figure the possible friend they have dreamed of. Kitty had so far in her life been wholly absorbed in her mother. But Gatty was beautiful to her; she was lovely in tint and contour; her eyes were large, blue, rather languishing; her fluffy hair bright gold. Her gown was blue; the bodice moulded like a glove to the figure; the skirt of great amplitude, all worn with a royal sort of ease. She filled Kitty with a joyful sense of life, light, and color. In return Gatty, who did not appreciate her own healthy freshness of aspect, found something in the other's dark, eager face, novel, stimulating, full of spirit and zest.

While the two girls stood each in her own way measuring the vital and mobile individuality of the other, the marchesa's hand was laid once more upon her daughter's arm and her voice broke in again, —

“This is my little girl, Caterina. Kitty, let me introduce you to Mr. Haliburton and Mr. Rennie.

Can you make them some tea? I am afraid the water is cold."

Kitty, bestowing a single stare and a little nod on the two men, flew at the samovar. Haliburton, a man of middle age, with a clear, sensible face and a half-shy manner, offered his services, which Kitty declined. Stepping back he found himself by Agatha Darrow, and the two stood watching the young girl at the samovar, and the marchesa talking to Glendenning Rennie.

"I am interested in seeing Glen meet the marchesa," Agatha observed presently.

"They are second cousins; they have known each other from childhood."

"It goes for granted that they are cousins," said Gatty. "I suppose everybody in this room is related to everybody else."

"Not I," said Haliburton. "I happen to be your father's cousin, but I am not related to the Amorys."

"Not to Constance Bertini?"

"No."

"I suppose you have always known her?"

"No, indeed."

"You knew her before her marriage?"

"I first saw her in Italy twelve years ago. Never since until now."

"That was when Glen Rennie fell in love with her."

"I suppose all the world knows that unlucky circumstance."

"That Glen fell in love with her? It is just the one thing that everybody in the family does know about Glen."

If this actually expressed the state of affairs, the marchesa's little talk with Rennie may be interesting.

"I asked Richard if he knew anything about you," she was saying.

"I suppose he told you that he knew no good."

"He said that he went nowhere, saw nobody, and knew nobody."

"I am always the same old sixpence," said Glen. "I am here stuck in the mud as usual; John takes pity on me, — gives me a home. I came yesterday to stay with him."

"I heard he was to open the house himself instead of renting it."

"He has opened it. I like it prodigiously, — a charming old-fashioned place. I have never in all my life enjoyed anything as I enjoyed to-day. John gave me all the keys, and then went off to town. Not a woman came near me to hinder me. I ransacked the garret, and Dilsey helped me bring down all the bits of furniture I liked, to furnish my two rooms. I always felt that I had a talent for the domestic."

While Rennie was talking, Kitty brought him a cup of tea, but he did not even glance at her. He was looking at Constance.

"I also go about rummaging," said the marchesa. "I have tried to restore the old look of

things. I want Kitty to sit in the very places and do the same things I did as a child."

"Ah, Kitty!" said Rennie, with tragical emphasis. "What you do is all for Kitty! I do everything for myself. I hate the younger generation pushing us to the wall. I am ready to say to them, 'You are taking my share of sunshine and life.'"

Kitty, meanwhile, unconscious that she was standing in any one's sunshine, was inquiring of John Haliburton, on whom she now had leisure to spend a word and look, whether he too was a cousin.

"I regret to say I have not that honor," he replied.

"I am so glad," she returned, with the air of imparting a confidence; "my cup of cousins is full. Another, and it would overflow." She drew a deep breath. "How do you take your tea?" she then proceeded to inquire; and when Haliburton answered that he had no choice, she said she would give him Russian tea — that everything Russian was the fashion.

"Or so the Americans used to tell us when they came to see us at the villa," she added.

"Did you permit the Americans to come to Fiesole and dictate fashions to you?" he asked.

Kitty explained that after Easter, each spring, when all the Americans were stopping in Florence on their way back from Rome, the marchesa had received on Wednesdays. Days longed for, dreaded, enjoyed, then dropped into comfortable oblivion until Easter came round again. The marchesa

liked to see her compatriots, and to keep herself in touch with what was going on in America. Nevertheless, she used to say each year she should never dare go back.

“Why not?” Haliburton inquired.

“We were so delightfully shabby. The Americans were so fine, so fastidious, so clever, mamma said they had developed far beyond her possibilities of living up to. They knew everything, — all the history, all the art, architecture, schools. Our ignorance of what we knew best was so vast, their conversation dropped into it like pebbles into the sea — it was swallowed up. Then I was in such awe of their toilettes! Mamma has tried beyond everything to make me American; but those toilettes cost so much! You see, at the villa we could wear our old things comfortably, as the peasants do, feeling that a good thing lasts forever. When the Americans came to see us, I had to fall back on being an Italian. I am an exile without a country; I am an Italian among Americans, and an American among Italians.”

Haliburton smiled at Kitty as at a child one wishes to encourage.

“Is the gentleman who came with you a cousin?” she now inquired.

“He is a cousin, — the last drop which makes your cup brim over. He is a second cousin of your mother’s. He is also my half-nephew; the son, that is, of the eldest child of my mother’s first marriage, my half-sister.”

"He is very handsome, I think," Kitty observed, with the air of a connoisseur. "Quite the best looking man in the room. What is his name?"

"Glendenning Rennie. We call him Glen."

"Cousin Glen, — cousin Glen," Kitty repeated, her face taking on a look of eager mental activity. "Why, I remember a cousin Glen."

Rennie hearing his name uttered at the top of the young girl's lungs, turned and bowed with an air of high ceremony, opening his long dark eyes with questioning surprise.

"You don't mean to tell me you have had the impertinence to grow up," he said. "Why, I used to hold you in my arms."

"I used to kick you to make you put me down," Kitty rejoined, with nonchalance. "I remember you very well."

"I never supposed you would take it into your head to grow up," Rennie murmured. "It is the most tiresome habit." And he transferred his attention to the marchesa.

"Do you by any chance remember me?" Haliburton inquired of Kitty.

"Did I ever see you before?" she returned, looking at him as if for the first time.

"The marchesa even did not remember me," said Haliburton. "But I, too, was in Italy that summer with Glen."

"I think that is not quite fair," the marchesa now observed, having overheard Haliburton's words. "For one moment I forgot — it was twelve years ago."

"And I was only one of a dozen," suggested Haliburton.

"One of a dozen of mamma's admirers?" Kitty asked, laughing.

"Well, yes," said Haliburton, changing countenance slightly.

"Do you mean that you were in love with mamma?"

"Being in love has never been a habit of mine," Haliburton answered evasively, under the fire of the young girl's glance.

"Being in love is a very great thing, Caterina *mia*," said the marchesa in a tone of amiable tolerance. "We rarely speak of it. It comes but once in a life."

"But you have been married twice, mamma *mia*," retorted the logical Caterina. "With which of your husbands were you in love?"

The marchesa laughed frankly, and both Haliburton and Glen Rennie joined her.

"You see how I have brought my little girl up," she said, with a half-deprecating gesture. "If she is an *enfant terrible*, it is because I love our American frankness, our lack of subtlety, our atmosphere of daylight and the open air."

"I think," said Kitty in Haliburton's ear, with a look and tone of naïve content, "it was poor papa she loved, for she has talked to me about him, and she has shown me his picture. Did you ever see either of them?"

Haliburton replied gravely that he had never

seen either Kitty's father or his predecessor. Kitty then, as if anxious to establish Haliburton's identity in her mind, went on to ask the most puzzling questions. Had he ever been married, and why not? Too old? Why, how old was he? Over forty? Surely there was yet time. Had he given up all idea of marriage? Great heavens no, — he thought of nothing else. Thought of nothing else and yet near forty-five! Did people have to get married by the time they were fifty or not at all? Mamma said that nothing, not even an offer from a reigning prince, would induce her to marry again, but she, Kitty, frankly considered it would be a pity not to be married as many times as one might. Mamma had been married only twice, — once to an American, and once to an Italian. This Kitty granted to have been a fair use of opportunities as far as it went. But she herself was in favor of the greatest possible variety. She should like to marry an Englishman, a Frenchman, a German, a Spaniard, a Russian. Not an Italian? No, scarcely an Italian. In one short life one could not do everything, and she was herself partly Italian and preferred novelties. An American? Oh yes, it went without saying that at least one husband should be an American. She liked nothing so well as Americans.

“I am a veritable American, am I not, *mamma mia*? That is, in everything except splendid clothes and looking and speaking as if the whole world belonged to me!” Kitty added, finding the

opportunity she was always seeking of intercepting her mother's eyes and ears.

"What does Mr. Haliburton think? Does he consider you a typical American girl?" inquired the marchesa.

"She speaks English exquisitely," said Haliburton.

"I want her to be American all through," said the marchesa. "I have tried to bring her up an American girl, just as I was brought up an American girl. Had her father lived, other influences might have asserted their force. As it is, she and I have been bound up in each other. We are exactly alike. All I think and feel and know and hope and believe, she thinks, feels, knows, hopes, and believes."

It was getting late. The low sun cast beautiful gleams of crimson and golden light into the wide, pleasant drawing-room. Gatty Darrow came up to Kitty.

"I hope we shall be no end of friends," she said.

Kitty's smile disclosed her small, even teeth. "I shall adore you!" she exclaimed. "You will not care for me."

"See if I don't."

The smile was still on the young girl's face when Haliburton and Glen Rennie said good-by.

"The little thing is n't more than half ugly," Glen observed to his companion as they walked across the grounds towards home. "My first

thought was to wonder how a beautiful woman like Conny could have such a little monkey for a daughter."

"Her eyes are fine," said Haliburton. He was^d not used to bring his corn to market in the green ear, so said no more about Kitty, not yet having made up his mind concerning her.

CHAPTER II.

A QUAKER UNCLE.

RICHARD AMORY had stood near his sister and his niece all through the reception, but so far we have not introduced him to the reader. He was the eldest of the family, while Constance was the youngest, and there was almost twenty years difference in their ages. He was a man of striking appearance: his hair was gray, his shaggy eyebrows deep black; his features were well moulded, and his smile was pleasant to meet, — but he smiled rarely. He was in the habit of saying that he himself had had little amusement in his life, and that nothing surprised him so much as the amount of amusement other people seemed to get out of things. He had two sons well towards forty years of age, — married and living within visiting distance. His wife (now dead about nine months) had been an invalid, living in the rarefied atmosphere of a sick-room, and seeking one form of cure after another, the last one being always of miraculous efficacy. Richard Amory had loved his wife tenderly, had had infinite pity for and patience with her. Her death made him a lonely man, and he had asked Constance and her daugh-

ter to make their home with him as long as he should live.

"I want thee and thy little girl to come and get the good of the old place while it lasts," he had said to her. "The boys will cut it up and sell it for building lots the moment I am dead."

Constance in her girlhood had loved the place with a sort of passion. It was called "Waldstein," and lay about eight miles from the city, on what had once been a country road, but was now become a bustling thoroughfare. John Waldstein had come out from Germany more than two hundred years before, and had bought two hundred acres "in a fine and fertile district with plenty of springs of fresh water, being well supplied with oak, walnut, and chestnut trees," to quote a chronicle of the period. His grandson, the third John Waldstein, had left one child, heiress to this family estate. She had married an Amory, and was the grandmother of Richard and his sister Constance. She, like all the Waldsteins, had been a plain Friend. Her husband became a Friend so far as occasionally attending meeting and thee and thou-ing his wife and family. Of their descendants a few had been worldly, but most of them Quakers. Richard Amory was one of the latter. Constance, on the other hand, had at an early age rebelled and thrown off the yoke; yet she sometimes in intimate conversation confessed that she was still more a Quakeress than a churchwoman, and that she loved the speech. The night she

and Kitty had arrived at Waldstein, Constance, exhausted by the voyage, oppressed by recollections, homesick for the dear old villa at Fiesole, had gone to her room feeling strangely lost and desolate, when a tap came at the door.

"I just came to ask," said her brother's voice, "if thee was comfortable. I want to do everything for thee that will make thee comfortable."

Constance flung wide the door, put her arms about Richard, and said, —

"It makes me comfortable to have thee say 'thee' to me."

"Of course," said Richard. "If outwardly thee laughs at it, in the bottom of thy heart, thee believes. Because with thy mother's milk thee drew it in, with thy ears, with thy eyes, and with thy understanding, thee absorbed it in thy infancy."

The old colonial house was of stone, facing the south, with two wide galleries, one above the other. The main structure was square, but was flanked by a long wing which at its end became part of a quadrangle of farm buildings. In front of the house was a long level lawn, dominated by a group of three tulip-trees and two oaks which were the joy of Richard Amory's heart. The gardens and orchards lay to the east; the drive was a straight avenue, bordered by maples, leading to the busy thoroughfare on the west. Beyond the gardens began what was left of the old forest, and on the other side of this belt of woodland was a group of pleasant retired country seats, with one or two of

.

which we may become familiar. Had Waldstein by a happier destiny lain here, it would not have been, as it now was, doomed to come to a speedy end. Speculators had been clamoring for the place for five years.

"Never while I live," Richard Amory invariably answered. Yet to have sold the estate would have been to make him rich, whereas now he was actually too poor to keep it up suitably. His two sons were impatient, incredulous, when they heard of the offers their father had refused.

"Sooner or later the property will have to go, sir," one said. "Why not now, when the flowing tide is towards you?"

"Never while I live." That was as good a phrase as need be; Richard Amory adhered to it. He would almost as soon have sold his children.

Probably it was the trees he loved most, and nowhere in that whole region of fine trees were his surpassed. The day after Constance and Kitty Bertini reached Waldstein, they went with him all over the place to see the trees, many of which were just pushing their buds. Richard Amory had never been abroad, rarely being able to command the requisite ready money.

"Twice," he said to Constance, "while thee has been living in Italy, I have said to myself that I would go over and see thee and a few other things in Europe, — principally the forests. But the money I expected either did not come or was needed for repairs, so I stayed at home, and read

about Fontainebleau, the Black Forest, and the rest of them. But thee has been there, and thee knows whether any of those trees are finer than mine."

There were a dozen trees on the place whose trunks could not be spanned by the three linking their hands and extending their arms to their widest.

Kitty had at first experienced an emptiness, a dreariness in the change. "Nothing but trees and a little brook,—grass and hedges, *mamma mia*," she had said; "one might as well live in a wood."

It had been different at the old white villa at Fiesole, which Constance had bought for a song, and had lived in all those happy years that Kitty had been growing up. Let us describe the way Kitty had spent those early days living with her mother and Lucia and Beppo. She slept in a sort of turret into which her mother's room opened. She would rise early, dress stealthily, that she might make no sound to disturb the marchesa's morning nap, and in summer by six o'clock would be sitting on top of the terrace wall, eating bread and honey, her eyes fixed, meanwhile, on the wide reaches of the valley and the dim mountain ranges. She liked the early morning view of Florence: the river with its mists growing pearly in the sunlight, the roofs and domes and campaniles one by one emerging out of the sea of vapor, which, clearing little by little, finally retired towards the far withdrawn horizon, where it changed from turquoise to

amethyst, from sapphire to emerald, to chocolate. It took so long for the valley to wake up. Even when the poplars and the olive-trees stirred in the morning breeze, the cypresses stood still and black, holding the secret of the night; when all the other shadows had chased each other to the ramparts of the hills, they were still as dark and mysterious as ever.

Her fast broken, Kitty would go to feed her birds in the aviary, already calling her impatiently. Then she shared with Beppo the care of the white donkeys, the black goats and their kids. Besides these, there were a dozen odd and harmless pets, guinea-pigs, two squirrels, and a marmoset. If it had not rained in the night, the little channel from the basin of the fountain on the terrace must be opened to irrigate the oleanders, pomegranates, oranges, and figs, besides the beds of clove-pinks, roses, and lilies. And when Lucia was busy, she was apt to beg the signorina to go to the back gate and watch for the peasant woman who brought the milk and, each morning, a roll of fresh butter wrapped in green leaves. This latter it was Kitty's delight to work over and over in cool water into frothy pats in the shape of shells or flowers. By this time the marchesa would be ready for her coffee, which Lucia had made black and thick, and Kitty would take it to her mother, with hot foamy milk, crusty rolls, and her fresh butter, and arrange them on the table in the upper loggia.

Then again, on a market or festival day, when

Kitty found Beppo and Lucia ready to set out for the city in the cart, — the white donkeys standing sulkily, their heads bent down as if never to be raised again, their feet set stubbornly, — Kitty would take it into her head to go with them. In she would clamber, instantly falling upon the apricots and cherries, and off they would clatter down the drive, — Beppo, melancholy, inert, always chided by his wife Lucia, who, dressed in her best, was sure to be in the highest spirits, with her head set off by a flowered handkerchief and her bright silver pins. This pair was in the foreground, while behind was Kitty in a blue gingham frock, her dark, laughing face half hidden by a wide, flopping hat, her long braids, tied with red ribbon, over her left shoulder.

Arrived in Florence, devotions must be attended to, and while Lucia plumped down on the stones to say her prayers, Kitty had time to wander dreamily round the duomo, exchanging greetings, as it were, with the virgins, madonnas, bambinos, angels, and choristers which she knew and loved in the mosaics, frescoes, paintings, and bas-reliefs. Sometimes she stood peering up into the dome, wondering; again she peeped into the sacristy, and perhaps asked questions of the old priests busy with their cope-folding, chalice-rinsing, and candle-scraping. Sometimes she herself knelt and said her prayers in one of the chapels, but the moment Lucia's final genuflections were over Kitty was at her side, eager for the market, where they relieved Beppo, and dis-

patched him to snatch his own portion of grace. Little that went on between her portion of earth and sky escaped Kitty. She knew all the relations, all the cronies, all the secrets of Beppo and Lucia's *milieu*. Entirely at her ease, delighted to be looked up to and called "la signorina," she could in turn pass opinion, instruct, compliment, and chide with an air of complete ascendancy. When she was tired of the chaffering and the cheapening, she would call Lucia, and ask her of what she could be thinking to waste her whole morning in idleness. Then Lucia would summon Beppo, accusing him of robbing the marchesa by his loitering and lingering. Beppo, in turn, would spend his pangs of conscience in punishing the donkeys, telling them they had eaten their heads off. Then, all regathered, off the party would proceed back to Fiesole, up the steep ascent between white villas with cloistered courts and rows of box and laurel and oranges and limes; campaniles guarded by two cypresses; high walls out of which poppies blossomed in every cranny and chink. Along the road they would exchange greetings with some old woman bearing home clippings from a vineyard, her burden making her look like a moving *pergola*, or a peasant girl driving a donkey-cart full of the carnations, larkspurs, and roses she was carrying to the city to deck a wedding *festa*, her wide straw hat wreathed with poppies, while in shrill, long-drawn cadence she crooned a monotonous chant about a sweetheart and her constancy. At home

again, Beppo would be dispatched to the mulberry-trees to pick leaves for the silkworms almost ready to wake up, and Beppo always complaining that the sun was too hot, or the elevation too wind-swept for comfort, Kitty herself would clamber up and fill her own bag and rush off to feed the ravenous creatures.

Kitty had had no thought of the picturesqueness, the æsthetic opportunity of what it had been her daily habit to see and do and think and feel. But life in the Tuscan villa had been pleasant, with its homely, every-day sights and sounds, and the feeling that she was necessary, that she had her finger on the mainspring of the whole mechanism, had been not only a call to action, but a source of pleasure.

But she soon found new interests at Waldstein. It was late April. The weather was surpassingly beautiful — “real American weather,” as Constance said; she had been homesick for it for twenty-two years. Crocuses, hyacinths, tulips, violets, and daisies were springing up in the border; the woods were starred with liverwort, wind-flowers, and bloodroot. Pear and cherry trees were beginning to blossom. It was not Italy, but it was beautiful, nevertheless. Then all through the woods appeared the snowy bracts of the dogwood, clouds of stars making a wonderful milky way. Kitty was about ready to believe that after all nothing in the world was quite so lovely as Waldstein. The first glimmer of pale green on the treetops, the

tasseling and blooming of the shrubs, the twitter and trill of the returning birds went to her head. She and Richard Amory used to go over the whole place every day. In a week she knew every tree in the wood as well as he, every flower in copse and garden, all the vegetables, and might almost be said to have counted the blades of wheat and rye in the hill-lot which Richard Amory planted with grain each year, that he might see it wave as the summer winds played over it.

Richard Amory was in general a silent man ; a man used to silence too ; expression, expansion, was not a necessity of life to him, — hardly a possibility. His mind was always revolving the same problem, — the law of mutability, the inevitable decree that all is change, that nothing can endure. As soon as he was dead a new street would be opened through his place ; the house would go, — more than that, the clump of tulip and oak trees on the lawn. Tears rose scalding his eyes at the recurrent thought. He knew that a man must accept the inevitable ; he had borne much, and without shrinking, but this was the crowning sorrow. Yet what difference did it make ? The human race goes on, — the human race of which he was merely one constituent atom, burning itself out, and soon to be extinguished. Kitty with her prattle, her questions, her quick impressions was another atom, — just that and nothing more.

But Kitty pleased him, nevertheless.

CHAPTER III.

A NEST OF COUSINS.

TWO families of Darrows lived on the west side of the old Waldstein woods, — Mrs. Edward Darrow, a widow with one son, familiarly called Teddy, and the Ambury Darrows, whose three daughters we have already met. Not far away was John Haliburton's place, which his mother had inherited from her grandmother, who had been an Ambury, and who, indeed, was also the grandmother of Ambury Darrow, who was accordingly John Haliburton's second cousin. The two were law partners. The senior was a little man with a face full of energy and force, with bright eyes, a gray mustache, and a lean, pointed jaw. He walked with a limp, talked incessantly, cleverly, but with constant parentheses and zigzags, making frequent gestures. His wife was large, blonde, handsome, and stately. Before her husband she was habitually silent. It was not that she was afraid of him, but the two lived in different mental worlds. He admitted nothing as a fact, even as a legitimate conclusion, that he could not pin down, analyze, and inevitably prove. Mrs. Darrow liked theories, and had so wide a generalizing sweep of mind that she did not trouble herself

about mere facts. She took a very serious view of life, and unless she could make her least pursuit a duty and responsibility she could have no pleasure out of it. She even made up her menus with a view to the different articles of food furnishing just the right constituents for human nutrition.

She had accepted her three daughters as heaven-sent responsibilities, and by reading all the books she could find with a bearing on the subject, and listening to all the lectures for mothers and teachers, Mrs. Darrow had soon evolved a theory about the best method of bringing up children. The object of her life was to fulfill every one of their possible claims upon her. She had watched and studied them from their earliest infancy. She had filled a volume with the notes she had made on the personal characteristics of each of the three. Thus understanding them thoroughly, her object had been to make life as easy to them as possible. Not that she would have permitted this definition of her system. On the contrary, she had a momentous theory on the subject which was this:—

Progress and improvement are a matter of spontaneous development in the natural order of things. Any effort to aid the bourgeoning of a flower is more likely to disturb than assist the result. All that can be done is to furnish heat, light, sustenance. Nature gives the irresistible push. An equally scientific method is required in the bringing up of children. Surround them with good influences. Let them have all they need to fur-

ther every enterprise and effort; let them adapt themselves to their environment and work out their salvation in it.

At every stage of their careers, Mrs. Darrow had demanded of her daughters that they should study their requirements and feel sure that they were expanding in the right direction. Mrs. Darrow could not analyze even what she wanted herself; she was too optimistic. She liked the rounded, the complete, the symmetrical, the beautiful. She felt that her daughters were quite clever enough to do the greatest things. Her vague wish was that each should appoint herself a great and glorious destiny, and walk forward with an illumined mind and heart to meet it.

Nevertheless, in spite of their unlimited prerogatives to be absurd, the Darrow girls had grown up rather particularly nice, and were very far from being as individual, as eccentric, or even as highly endowed with original genius as their mother had expected them to be. Each had from her childhood done whatever seemed to her best. Each had chosen her own studies, instructors, place of education. Each had even been offered her own religion. But, after all, what they had asked for had been much the same as other healthy-minded young beings of their age and sex crave. And instead of being carried by irresistible centrifugal force into an erratic orbit, the strongest influence they had so far felt was the purely centripetal attraction of home. Each one had, it is true, made choice of an oc-

cupation, a profession. Sue had taken part of a course in hospital nursing. Millicent wrote, — nobody was quite sure what it was, but Mrs. Darrow said she was struck by Millicent's literary ability. Agatha was to be a painter. They were, as their mother said, fitted for the competition, the struggle of existence. Meantime, without any competition, any struggle, they remained happy at home, busy, absorbed, more or less useful to the state and world. It was necessary, Mrs. Darrow now said, to expand before concentrating themselves. Although for success it is necessary to have a specialty, a specialty narrows.

Their father adored them all. He frankly considered his wife's ideas fantastic. "Oh, she is always fooling with some nonsense I can't understand," he was in the habit of saying, yet he considered that, upon the whole, her bringing up of his daughters had not been amiss. They were capital company for him, clear-headed, lucid, fluent, prompt in taking up any idea by its right handle.

"By Jove!" Ambury Darrow had more than once remarked to his partner, "I do believe that Sue would have made as good a lawyer as either of us if she had half our training."

Sue was by this time thirty-one, Millicent twenty-nine, while Agatha was in her twenty-fourth year.

"I have always thought it improbable that my girls would marry," Mrs. Darrow had more than

once observed, and in this respect they had so far fulfilled prediction. Otherwise they had, in spite of expectation, failed to astonish, even to shock, their large circle of relatives. They had their place in the social world, — a place of some predominance, possessing the advantages which belong to family prestige, combined with a large income to spend. But they were frankly interested in everything that went on inside and outside of society. They had a finger in every enterprise: could dance at balls, preside on committees, run bazaars, lead clubs, talk philosophy, poetry, or politics, all with the keenest enjoyment.

Not one of the three but dreamed of something more ideal. Each was passionately alive to the tenderer side of life with its happiness, weal, and woe. Each had pictured for herself a beatific existence as a married woman, with some possible or impossible husband coming from the every-day fairyland of a girl's fancy. Two, at least, of the three had at times seen in the flesh the ideal man who might, if he put forth his full strength, win her and realize the happiness she could bestow. But neither expected or counted upon such results; indeed, it was a question how their individual views of life would harmonize with the married state. They had thought about everything, talked about everything, until they knew, or thought they knew, the taste of the kernel of every nut offered to human beings to crack. They were too radiantly feminine not to have the strongest desire in their

natures to be beloved madly and overwhelmingly by some man stronger and nobler than themselves, — but almost as strong was the desire to help on the world in their own way.

The older Darrow girls had seen Constance Bertini in their childhood, and it gratified their every instinct of affection and curiosity that she had returned with her daughter to settle among them. It was also a subject of thought, if not of remark, that almost at the same moment John Haliburton had for the first time since his mother's death come back to the neighborhood, bringing Glen Rennie with him.

That Haliburton had returned was a clear cause for congratulation. In spite of his being their cousin and their father's partner, the Darrow girls had never seen as much of him as seemed logical, even inevitable, under the circumstances.

Sue, in particular, had always had a feeling of his being an elusive quantity. Haliburton was shy, ill at ease in her company. And yet she was ready and willing to have done a great deal for him. His loneliness since his mother's death inspired her sympathy. He was used to a woman in his life, and a man who has ever been used to a woman cannot get along without a woman. Starting from a sentimental point of view a man needs affection, the tenderness which only a loving woman can feel. A woman may pet herself, alleviate her desolation by the luxuries and amenities of life, but a man is so helpless! Then from a

practical point of view Haliburton needed just the right wife, somebody to look after his social and domestic interests. Without her he was simply wasting his existence. Thus it appeared the most rational act of Haliburton's career that he should have come to live among his cousins and look about him.

The coincidence of his bringing Glendenning Rennie to live with him amused all the neighborhood, for it was well known that Glen had been in love with Constance Amory ever since he was seventeen. As a boy, his being in love had not counted ; but when at the age of twenty-six he had filled out the term of a vacant consulship in Italy, he had seen Constance after her second widowhood, and the passion had gone deep, — as deep, that is, as anything ever went with Glen. Every one exonerated Constance. She was a woman absolutely without coquetry. She had been adored all her life, and to have Glen in love was nothing very particular. Nobody could very well expect her to marry for the third time, — above all, that she should marry a delicate young fellow not only without an income, but without a career.

If at the age of twenty-six Glen had been without an income or a career, what was he at thirty-eight but a dead failure when he still had neither income nor career? Without any chronic ailment, he had been unlucky enough to have one long illness after another which had robbed him of his chance. He had done clever things. Editors oc-

casionally accepted his poetry ; he had published a book of poems entitled "Love Unfulfilled," which certain good critics had praised. Nothing could have been more taken for granted than that he would have some success in literature, but he still remained just where he had started, — an occasional musical, dramatic, and art critic. Fastidious by instinct and habit, he was a born connoisseur, loving art in all its forms, and finding in it the charm of a continual surprise and inspiration. In person he was singularly attractive : his face was unusual and striking, long and narrow in shape, lighted by a pair of intensely brilliant, deep-set eyes which were of no particular color, but in different moods took on different hues. His smile, too, was charming. He was, as we have seen, related both to the Amorys and Darrows, his father having been first cousin to Ambury Darrow and to the father of Richard Amory, and the worth of the connection had been deepened by long habit of affectionate intimacy and association.

Haliburton was quiet, sedate, and from his youth had an air of discretion and wisdom as of one who is never caught unaware. It had been the opinion of all the neighborhood ever since his mother's death, five years before, that he and Sue Darrow must inevitably come together. She was bright, fluent, amusing. Anybody with a sense of proportion could see that John needed just such a wife to balance him.

We have spoken of Mrs. Edward Darrow, the

widow of Ambury Darrow's brother, but we must describe more particularly her son Teddy, a youth of twenty, who was an admirable fellow, handsome, always dressed to perfection, whether for cricket, dinner, his wheel, or to pay visits. He gave the impression of conceit, but he was not conceited, — in fact rather humble. But it was his way to take himself seriously, to weigh every word if he gave his opinion about the weather, even to eat his soup as if he were an image of a god assisting at a function. He was penetrated by the idea of the important place he had to fill in life, and he rarely laughed.

These were the friends and neighbors the marchesa and Kitty were to meet often and know intimately.

CHAPTER IV.

KITTY AND THE MARCHESA.

"SIMPLY the most adorably sensible woman I ever saw in my life," was what Ambury Darrow said to his daughters about Constance Bertini.

Kitty told her uncle that the way the marchesa's old friends greeted her, Kitty, was, "I cannot see that you resemble your mother in the least. Ah, she was the most beautiful girl."

Constance, oddly enough, cared little or nothing about these allusions to her good looks, but she did pique herself upon the possession of good common sense, knowledge of the world, and power of adapting herself to her environment. To what is called society, "all festivity and a round of dinners," she was utterly indifferent, but she had the faculty of putting zest and charm into the commonest matters of every-day life. Without any effort she became, wherever she was, the central figure. No woman was ever so easy to live with, so cheerful, so good-humored, so indulgent to the faults of others. But then it seemed as if nobody displayed any faults to her. Her satellites revolved round her, coerced, like the moon by the earth, to show only their shining side.

She had not been at the head of Richard Amory's house a week before it seemed to him he was living on a new scale of elegance and luxury ; and yet, on analyzing the matter, he perceived it was only that the servants were suddenly inspired to carry order and method into certain details, and that Constance herself possessed the magical trick of turning everything to account. By the arrangement of a spray of flowers, a dish of fruit and leaves, a quickly tossed up salad, the whole aspect of a table and a meal was changed. Then, too, accustomed to the European fashion of sitting out of doors in pleasant weather, Constance would have afternoon tea and after-dinner coffee served on the veranda, in the summer-house, or under the tulip-trees.

"It is the knack not of a rich but of a poor woman," Constance would say when her methods were commented on. "Nothing need be hideous or dull or monotonous unless we make it so."

Kitty had an intense relish for carrying out the least of her mother's ideas. Almost from the time her little daughter was born Constance had experienced a vibrating responsive quality in her. Kitty was a part of herself and she was a part of Kitty's self. To each the look, speech, touch of the other was the answer to a need, the satisfaction of a hunger. In rearing her child, Constance had treated her simply as another Constance Bertini, pouring into the opening heart and mind her own knowledge, beliefs, logic, instincts, like a strength-

ening cordial. Whatever her mother had felt or done Kitty expected in her time to feel and do. To Kitty her mother's wit, skill, resource, were inexhaustible. Her manner, her conversation, her dress, although it was always the same, was something to study and find poetry in. To do things as her mother did was an impossible dream of perfection. Yet through some efficacy of her mother's, — not through any grace of her own, — Kitty expected ultimately to attain it. Constance had such a world of pretty ways the young girl would have liked to appropriate to herself: her easy mastery of her toilette, for example. Constance gathered up the masses of her bright brown hair, gave them first a toss, then two twists and a coil, ran three pins through the knot, and the coiffure was complete, ready for the little cap. The thing was done and done beautifully. She slid into her gown in an instant. Nothing caught, nothing tore, nothing was in the way or out of the way. Grace, finish, symmetry, perfection of detail without effort, — all these were a part of the marchesa's personality; also promptness without haste.

Kitty herself alternated between long dawdling and tearing hurry, was always ready so early that her soul died within her while she waited for the time to come, or so late that she lost the cream of things. Then, too, her own frocks were always an embarrassment, either so short she was not presentable before visitors, or so long that she tore and soiled them in climbing trees or running races

with the dogs. To Kitty clothes seemed invented simply to hinder her from play. Her mother's simple elegance, her aerial freedom from thought or consciousness about herself, her readiness to throw herself into any occupation of the moment, were at once Kitty's delight and her despair.

"Mamma *mia*, shall I ever, can I ever, be like you?" she would cry out.

"Better than I am I hope," Constance would reply. "I had no mother to tell me things."

Constance not only said this to Kitty but she said to herself, "I made mistakes; I had no mother to show me how to avoid making mistakes, but Kitty shall make none."

"Did hooks and buttons ever get in your way? Did your hair ever get into snarls and knots?" Kitty would ask.

"Everything got in my way. It used to seem to me as if all I needed to be perfectly happy was to have my hair clipped close to my head, I hated it so. Now, Kitty, I really think you are getting to do your braids beautifully."

Kitty drew a long breath. She was not often praised, indeed she was not often criticised. Constance fancied it destroyed simplicity of character to analyze, to dwell on traits, to make allusions to habits, tastes, individual inclinations. Instead, she meant at every turn to direct Kitty, to mould her, to prepare and brace her for the greater ordeals of life.

"When may I put my braids up on my head?" Kitty asked.

"Oh, I would wait a little, would you not? Of course it is nice for me to keep you a little girl, but that is not the main thing. It seems to me it is nice for you to be kept a little girl. So long as you are a mere child you can come into the drawing-room, or stay away, just as you please. You may be a little careless about your dress, and nothing matters very particularly. But if you put up your hair and become a young woman, think of the high standard you will have to live up to."

Kitty tried to decide the knotty problem of whether this freedom from criticism was one of the chief compensations of existence, or whether it might not be too dearly bought. For instance, she had taken a fancy to her cousin, Glen Rennie, partly because he was a resurrection of the old Italian days, partly on account of his good looks, his amusing talk, combined with his apathetic, high-handed manner and tone to her. For he seemed to consider her the merest child. He criticised her, found fault with her. He had already told her more than once that it seemed strange a fairly good-looking woman like the marchesa should have such an ugly daughter. With appalling frankness he had remarked that she was thin as a rail; pointing at her arm he had once exclaimed, "What do you call that thing, anyhow?" Then her complexion he declared was too dark, and when she was sulky, as she alas too often was, her eyebrows fairly beetled; and he went on to say

that although that swift swallow-like motion might do very well supposing she were a bird and lived up in the air, in the house one sighed for repose. Finally, about her behavior, her odd speeches, her strange questions, — he inquired sadly whether she had ever heard of the man who, on going to visit his relations, was obliged to sit down and weep because they had no manners.

“Have I no manners, cousin Glen?” Kitty had asked imploringly, fearful lest he might be on the point of shedding tears.

“Not one,” he had answered sadly. “Not a single one.”

No wonder, Kitty said to herself, that she bored her cousin Glen, — that he always turned to the marchesa with an air of relief; for her mother had such beautiful manners.

There were, it is true, certain distinct advantages about having no manners. If Kitty happened to be curious about a person’s age, she could put the question bluntly. She had also inquired whether the curly crop of hair which surmounted Mrs. Willoughby’s head was her own; if not, how she fastened it on. She liked to understand things, pluck the heart out of the mystery; and when her mother explained, “Oh, my little girl is such a barbarian,” the matter seemed not to signify. The marchesa had desired that her daughter should put all her heart, soul, and strength into whatever she undertook, and Kitty had not yet learned where to tread lightly and where to bear her full weight.

She was expected always to be doing something, always learning something, and did not discriminate between the intricacies of the English language and Mrs. Willoughby's hair. Good taste was simply the result of sure knowledge and quick perception. Kitty was nevertheless insensibly becoming influenced by conventions. It had been delightful to her to take her violin — on which she could play well enough to give herself raptures of feeling — into one of the tulip-trees and discourse music to the air. One afternoon, as she clambered to a higher branch, coming upon a nest of little beaks wide open waiting to be fed, she assumed the rôle of mother-bird and searched about for insects and grubs to fill them. When she finally descended from the leafy covert, dirty, torn, disheveled, she had emerged directly upon Mrs. Edward Darrow and her son, the latter elaborately gotten up in a silk hat, a cutaway coat, and a pair of delicate gloves which he had put on to pay his respects to the marchesa. Alas, when he condescended to offer his beautiful lavender finger to her, Kitty's little brown paw left dreadful marks on the immaculate kid.

The mortification of that moment was a powerful impulse towards conventional behavior. Kitty then and there determined that just as soon as she should have climbed every tree on her uncle's place she would give up these monkey-like tricks.

Her acquaintance with Agatha Darrow progressed. The large, ample ways of the Darrow

ménage interested her. Kitty, who had never in her life had more than a corner of her mother's quarters, looked in wonder at the independent belongings of the Darrow girls. Each had her own charming little suite, — bed-room, dressing-room, with a study, sitting-room, or atelier, as she might choose to term it, attached. Gatty called hers her studio. Each had her own piano, her own library, her own open fireplace and easy-chair; each had her own tea-table and chafing-dish. She could shut her door upon intruders and grapple with the infinite problem, — with a Welsh rabbit or a cup of tea to sustain her.

Gatty's grapple had not so far been remarkably impressive. Kitty, who possessed that instinctive connoisseurship which belongs to many Europeans, hardly knew what to say when she saw the radiant and extraordinary work of the young artist. There was a wonderful "Diana and Endymion" which had been laid aside. It made one tremble for the sleeping Endymion to see so many pounds weight *avoids* poised above him. The work at present on the easel was a "marine:" the turquoise blue was the sea; the orange and vermilion the sands and rocks; the dash of scarlet a buoy; while the surpassing flesh-tints belonged to two boys who had stripped and were swimming after a boat that had slipped its cable. This study belonged to the new school, and Kitty really knew nothing about the new school; accordingly she declared it was magnificent, — that it took her breath away.

"Glen came up to see it," Gatty observed, surveying her work from an acute angle of vision, "and he says it needs 'cooking together.'"

"'Cooking together,'" Kitty repeated in admiration. "I suppose that is what it does need."

"I hoped he would say it was n't half bad," Gatty added.

"Not half bad would not be very high praise."

"Oh yes, it would be high praise from Glen. He knows what is good. He does not spend himself in cheap praise."

"He gives me no cheap praise. I am sure of that."

"He admires nothing less than the marchesa," Gatty said, with a little nod.

"Oh yes, he admires mamma; he listens to her; he hears nobody else when she speaks. If he wishes to say anything he looks to secure her attention, and begins, 'Conny, I was just about to remark.' He knows, without turning, when she comes into the room. He always rises when he hears her step on the stairs."

"What a bore it must be to have such an adorer," said Gatty.

"I do not think mamma is bored. We all adore her."

Gatty laughed lazily. She did not enlighten the child on the subject of Glen's infatuation. She went back instead to her own career as an artist.

"I must do something fine," she said. "If I really believed that I had no genius for art I should

give it up and attempt something else. Mamma says that we must not narrow ourselves down to one choice until we are sure that it is our specialty. For a time we should test and develop all our capacities."

"It must be very interesting," said Kitty admiringly.

"What do you mean to make of yourself, Kitty?"

"I? Me? Make of myself?" said Kitty, changing color. "I do not know."

"You have originality, I fancy," said Gatty, knitting her brows and studying the young girl. "Whatever you do seems to be spontaneous, — to come out of yourself."

"It does not," Kitty cried triumphantly. "It is all mamma."

"Of course she is clever; she is very clever. She understands you; but you are not a puppet. You will gather up your forces presently. You will find out your own powers. Now, where I fail is in originality. I am tantalized by the idea that what I am trying to do has been done over and over again. Do you ever feel that way?"

"But I never do anything."

"You play the violin very well," insisted Gatty; "that is, for a young girl who has never had any particular instruction. You bring out the tone I love. Then your drawings are striking — even those figurines you moulded are fairly good."

"Mamma says I may thank heaven I have no

special talent in any direction, — that I shall not be laying up disappointments for myself. But she wants me to learn to do as many things as I can, and do them as well as I can, for there is always some use for them, and I shall be less at a loss for amusement.”

“Oh, amusement! I do not want amusement. I want to do something different from every-day women. Don't you?”

“I should like to be exactly like mamma.”

“You cannot be exactly like your mother. You are yourself; just as you have your own heart, lungs, nerve-centres, so you have your own intellect and soul. You have to live your own life, find your own salvation. I am always thinking of some possible great thing to do. If I had real genius as a painter that would be enough. Only I want to begin with a great achievement. I should like to startle the world.”

Kitty looked at Agatha in frank admiration.

“I feel so anxious not to miss anything,” Gatty proceeded radiantly. “I have sometimes thought I could be an actress, — but poppa would n't like it. And I should n't like the making-up, — or to act in the sort of rubbish they call plays nowadays. Still, an actress can sway her generation as no one else can, and one is not limited to one little feeble personality.”

Kitty drew a deeper breath. “Oh, to be Juliet, Imogen, Rosalind, Portia!” she murmured.

“Then, again, I feel as if I should like to go

and live among the poor; give up luxury altogether; eat as the poorest people do, dress like them, be one of them; then begin along with them and show them how to be better, cleaner."

"Yes, that is it," said Kitty, with conviction. "Cleaner. But I have always liked the peasants, — I love them."

"Oh, peasants — that is a different thing," said Gatty. "It is all a chimerical dream, I fear. Poor people like their own ways, their own dirt, and get comfort out of what they are used to, just as we do. Then, too, that is Sue's line. She simply walks into poor people's houses and scrubs them and their clothes, and their beds and tables and floors. She likes nothing better. She says to make some little part of God's creation cleaner is enough to have lived for. She ought to be advertised along with Pears' soap. I confess I should prefer something a little more ideal. If I could be carried off my feet by some great distinguishing passion!"

Kitty repeated the words with profound awe, —

"Some great distinguishing passion."

"Something that lifts one above the soft pillows one sleeps on, the table one eats from. I want a feeling that takes possession of one's heart and soul, fills one's mind and heart, so that one can think of nothing else, — care for nothing else. It might be for a man" —

"A man?" exclaimed Kitty.

"Not necessarily so. Yet I should never be

willing to marry without feeling it, should you?"

"I never thought about it," Kitty murmured aghast. "Do you mean being in love?"

"Of course. There are so few men who can really inspire a great passion. Think of feeling it for Teddy!"

"Oh no, — oh no, that could n't be."

"Or for cousin John Haliburton!"

"Hardly."

"One could easily enough fall in love with Glen," proceeded Gatty, with a little soft sigh, "but it would be hardly worth one's while."

"Why not?" Kitty inquired, eager for illumination.

Gatty laughed. What she meant was that he was already in love with somebody else, but she said, —

"Oh, Glen is too poor, — he is not strong. He has been near dying more than once."

Tears rushed to Kitty's eyes and brimmed over.

"That would be a reason for loving him," she faltered. "But mamma thinks he is stronger now. She and uncle Richard were saying that in the Rennie family if they pass the age of thirty-five, they sometimes live to be old, quite old."

Gatty hurried away from the subject of Glen, which seemed to torment Kitty, back to dreams of a life of endeavor, of duty, of sacrifice. This ease, this luxury, this sitting in comfortable chairs, making tea and eating sandwiches and bonbons, was

corrupting, unsatisfactory, nugatory; she needed to be braced by the tonic of some great and heroic ideal. The largeness, the vividness of the thought of what was possible in the nobler world of aspiration and idea stirred and excited Kitty. She had to go home through the woods where the singing of the thrushes thrilled her, and made her feel a part of the happy world, and when she burst in upon the group sitting under the tulip-trees, they all paused and looked at her.

"Why, Kitty," said Constance, "what is it?"

"Thee has brought home two very red cheeks," said Richard Amory.

"And two very bright eyes," said Glen Rennie. "Did you meet Prince Charming in the wood?"

It was almost dinner-time, and Glen and Hali-burton were just about to take leave. Richard Amory walked across the grounds with them, and Constance stretched out her arms to Kitty.

"Where were you?" she asked.

"At Gatty's; she and I were talking," said the young girl. She knelt beside her mother, and laid her hands in her lap.

"What were you talking about that was so interesting?"

"Everything. She showed me her pictures. She told me about herself. She is so good, so brave! She told me all the things she longed to do."

"What does she long to do?"

"Something great if she can."

"Oh yes, — they all delight in the large, the magnificent."

"And she asked me what I — I — I expected to do in the world," said Kitty, with a peal of laughter.

"What did you answer?"

"At first I said I did not know. Then I told her I wished in every way to be just like you, mamma *mia*."

"You dear child! Did that satisfy her?"

"She said I had to live my own life. What do you think, — she declares that I am clever."

"Clever enough to understand, — to be a help, a comfort, — not clever enough to do anything very wonderful. What else?"

"Then we talked about having some great distinguishing passion."

"Some great distinguishing passion. For what, pray?"

"Something that takes one off one's feet, as it were. One might feel it for a man if he were very, very superior. She said it could n't be for Teddy Darrow, for example, — or for Mr. Haliburton."

"It is just as well to discriminate a little. Was there anybody who did come up to your fastidious requisitions?"

"Oh yes, — cousin Glen."

"Cousin Glen!"

"Only" —

"Only what?"

"Gatty says it would be of no use to fall in love

with him, because he is poor and not strong. I said I thought that was the very reason for it."

"I don't quite understand what a distinguishing passion is," said Constance. "Does it distinguish one's self or the other person?"

"It is just a sort of phrase. One knows what it means."

"Or thinks one knows," said Constance, laughing with irrepressible amusement. "I have heard women say they had a passion for strawberries and cream. Heine says somewhere that in his early days his passion was for apple-tarts, but when he grew old, his passion was for love, liberty, religion, and so forth."

Kitty listened with her head on one side.

"We finally decided," she now explained, "that after all if one could only have some occasion for sacrifice, for duty, that would be best. She wishes to be a great artist; failing that, to live among the poor, and teach them how to appreciate art."

Constance had listened patiently, trying to separate the single grain of wheat from the chaff.

"Gatty is sure to do something fine," she now said. "She may be a little confused and bewildered about what is best to do, but finally her ideas will take shape. When one is a little at a loss as to the direction in which one's duty lies, the best way is to accept the task which lies nearest."

Kitty nodded. "I see."

"What is absolutely real, — what we can see, hear, touch, feel, we can be certain about. What

is vague, shadowy, problematical may as well be postponed until we have accomplished what is under our hands."

"For example, I had better go and change my frock, and get ready for dinner," said Kitty. Constance laughed, but she was not yet through.

"And you remember the prayer of St. Catherine of Siena," said Constance. "It is loving that is the first duty of all."

"That is the easiest," Kitty returned. As she went upstairs, she was repeating St. Catherine's prayer to herself, — praying that she might be able to love the least well endowed of God's creatures, the ugly, even the repulsive, in order that in the light of that love she might discover what without that light is hidden, — the sweet, reasonable soul of which each child of God contains a particle.

"Still," Kitty argued to herself, "that is charity, — it is not a great distinguishing passion."

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CHAPTER V.

"LOVE UNFULFILLED."

"OH, why was I not brought up to some honest trade so that I might cheat people and make a fortune comfortably?" Glen Rennie would say. It disturbed John Haliburton nowadays to have him say it. Haliburton knew, or thought he knew, that Glen was trying to decide whether he could justify himself for making Constance Bertini a second proposal of marriage. Glen had offered himself to her once without any particular income, but a man of twenty-six can afford to throw prudence to the winds. Haliburton suffered under the conviction that when a man is nearing forty years of age he has no right to ask a woman to become his wife unless he can give her all the comforts she has been accustomed to. Constance Bertini was, perhaps, as superior to dressmakers and milliners as one of her sex may be, yet in Haliburton's opinion, if there was a woman in the world who ought to have the emancipation which comes from a large income, Constance was that woman. A beautiful house, carriages, fruit, flowers, everything that can lend a charm to existence, — that was what Haliburton would like her pos-

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sible husband to offer to begin with. But then Haliburton was rather a rich man. "John having amassed wealth now seeks virtue," Glen often explained, after the Horatian example. Haliburton had more than once found himself computing how he could manage to give Glen a reasonable income in case Constance Bertini should reward his long devotion. For it was an impossible thing to enter into the state of mind in which Glen might be planning to have the marchesa share his somewhat Bohemian existence, although to shift his personal point of view in order to understand and sympathize with Glen was Haliburton's way.

"I could give them enough to live on comfortably," he would say to himself. Actually the very fact that Glen was poor, that he had none of that sort of practical push in him which enables a man to make a competence by industry or calculation, that he was in some degree a failure, showed his need of just the right companionship. But was Constance Bertini likely to give it?

"John is so modest he humiliates one," was another saying of Glen's. "I loathe modest people."

Haliburton knew himself to be anything but modest. He knew that he was selfish, impatient, and rebellious. His history was this: He was the only child of his mother's second marriage, and his father dying early the relation between the mother and son became the closest possible. During her lifetime he had hardly thought of

marrying; he had rarely left her. Twelve years before, however, when Glendenning Rennie had been consul at —, John had gone over to spend a few weeks with him. He there met Constance Bertini. He saw her only a few times for she lived in great seclusion. For him to have said that he had fallen in love with her he would have considered presumption, almost impertinence. Besides, Glen was in love with her, — was on the point of offering himself to her. Nevertheless, Haliburton's mind, heart, soul, and physical sense had ever since been dominated by the thought of this one woman. In remembering her all these years he had experienced a certain pang, but a pang he would not have missed, — for the pain of loving her was better than any other happiness he possessed. His feeling was very much as if she had been married to another man. Glen not only was in love, but, with the unhesitating audacity which was the attribute above all others that John did not possess, had appropriated to himself the perennial position of Constance's adorer. When he heard the news that Richard Amory had asked the marchesa and her daughter to come and live at Waldstein, Haliburton at once felt that he must give Glen every possible chance in his love affair. For twelve years Glen had talked about Constance. She had been the inspiration of his poems; the idea of her had been the touchstone of his taste, of his laboriously indolent efforts to achieve something better than every-day commonplace work.

Glen had a position on an evening paper, and was also engaged in the rehanging of a private art gallery.

He must be in town or not far away all summer. So Haliburton had said, "Suppose you and I go out and keep house in the old place?"

The thing was settled in a moment. For other people and their interests Haliburton had swift insight and instant decision.

"What bliss for me to have Conny and for you to have Sue!" Glen had said, with mischief. In all the world there was nothing and no one Haliburton dreaded as he dreaded Miss Darrow. Yet he had not swerved from this resolution. He had sent at once for two of his mother's old servants; he had set up his bachelor establishment. He and Glen were near neighbors to Waldstein, and that they were still nearer neighbors to the Ambury Darrows must be borne. No day passed without meetings with Richard Amory, his sister and niece. Their talks were endless. Glen was radiant, Constance apparently undisturbed in heart and mind. The two would talk an entire afternoon or evening about people, scenery, pictures, or books; the others sitting by and throwing in an occasional word. Glen could be the most agreeable of talkers, and Constance led him on, humoring him with suggestions. He had lived in many places, had known many people, and a question or hint from her would open up a chapter of reminiscences, and bring forth a whole gallery of portraits,

about each of which there would be some characteristic anecdote.

In all his life Haliburton had never so fully realized the possible charm of existence, but every day he began to feel more and more the torment of the situation.

For a few weeks the pressure of expectation was tolerable. He wanted Glen to be happy. He nerved himself to see Glen made happy. Then the suspense began to try him. The irksomeness of a doubt insinuated itself. He began to believe not only that Glen had no chance, but that it was wrong to encourage a state of affairs which was hopeless. Constance was not in love with Glen. Her friendship for him, although it was tinged with a thousand pretty, changeable lights of sympathy, could never become love.

It was Haliburton's nature, when anything touched his own feelings, to suspect himself, to doubt the truth of his own impressions, to be conscious of possibilities beyond his own insight and divination. Thus he hardly dared impose upon Glen his belief that his suit was hopeless.

The fact was that lovers did not seem to be in Constance's mind at all; not a necessity of life to her certainly, not even a distinction she courted. It actually seemed sometimes to Haliburton that she was as glad to see him as to see Glen. She listened when Glen poured out floods of talk about John, — fairly hugging himself with delight when he could make her laugh.

"Now you would n't call John a man of the world, would you, cousin Conny?" Glen said once.

"I have never quite understood what a man of the world is."

"Oh, I'm a man of the world," said Glen. "I mean the sort of fellow who gets on, has the best places, eats a good dinner that another man pays for. Put him in a room full of strangers, and in a quarter of an hour he is not only perfectly at home, but the head of the company."

"No," said Haliburton, "the marchesa knows very well that I am not that sort of individual at all."

"That is what I was saying," Glen proceeded. "I see the lack of it in John. I try to do my best. Now as for myself, man of the world although I may be, I take a back seat, — not through modesty, but a fellow has his reasons. If I have to go on a journey by myself, I do it inexpensively. Why not be a little Bohemian? I wear my old clothes, — surely it's no great sin to be out at elbows, — a slouched hat. No porter expects to get fees out of me. Suppose I grow hungry, I bolt a hasty sandwich, a thing inexpensive in itself, which also possesses the merit of lying like a lump of lead on my chest for the next twenty-four hours, giving me a distaste for other food. I snatch perhaps a frugal glass of beer. Thus I shirk the obligations, the distinctions which cost money. But when I ask John to go anywhere, our light shines before men. 'Take a pocketful of money,

John,' I say ; ' we must do the thing handsomely. The world accepts us at our own valuation.' We engage seats, berths, bedrooms in advance. We telegraph, we telephone, we are men who insist upon having the best, can pay for it, and everybody bows down before us. No hasty meals, no vulgar makeshifts. No, we avoid indigestion, nervousness, sleepless nights, by sitting down comfortably to wholesome courses. ' Give me all your spare cash, John,' I say ; ' we must be liberal ! ' We go to theatres, operas, — the best seats of course. The house stares at us in admiration. Oh, there is no end to the pains I've taken with John."

He described Haliburton as a youth: his solemn airs, the dramatic effect of his first suit of dress-clothes, his first chimney-pot hat.

" I always believed in John powerfully," Glen went on. " Did I ever tell you, Conny, how once when my mother was crossing the street on a muddy day, taking her own time, as her way was, she was about to be run over by an aristocratic equipage, when John seized the horses by their bridles, and at the risk of his life, while the animals plunged and reared, backed them against the curbstone, frightening the occupants of the carriage almost out of their senses. ' Were you going to run over my sister ? ' he thundered at the man on the box, who was white with fear. ' Is it not safe for a lady to cross Fifth Avenue in sight of her own house ? ' That's John," Glen proceeded. " Not quite what you would call a man of the world. He rarely

talks, but once or twice in his life he has done that sort of thing, and one takes it for granted there's a depth of power and meaning in him somewhere."

Glen went on illustrating Haliburton, telling stories of the old days when he used to wheedle quarters out of John for treats at the confectioner's, when John taught him to skate, initiated him into tobogganing, gave him his first real start in the Greek alphabet and in geometry.

"I have stuck by John all through his career," Glen said sadly. "I can't desert him now that he is in love."

"Mr. Haliburton in love?" said Constance. She turned to him in frank surprise. The two men had been dining at Waldstein, and they were all sitting on the veranda. It was long past sunset, but in the northwest there was still a glow which made the whole air luminous. As Constance's eyes met his, Haliburton experienced a powerful shock of feeling. Perhaps the color which came on both faces was a reflection, but Haliburton puzzled over the look he saw in hers for many a day to come.

"In love?" repeated Glen, full of whim and mischief. "Head over ears."

"And she?" said Constance no longer in eager surprise, but with the usual equipoise of mind and manner which characterized her.

"John knows," Glen whispered.

Haliburton was modest; he postponed his own wishes; he would not have robbed Glen of any chance; but he did not forget the look with which

Constance had turned to him. It ran the keenest meaning into him, cut him to the quick. All his conscience was on edge. Yet—yet— He sometimes in these days stamped his foot in his perplexity. To touch the subject in cold blood, to say to Glen, “Tell me what chance you have with her,” was impossible. Glen’s cause was sacred to him; he was ready to give him money to speed him in it,—if money were the only thing he lacked. But Haliburton could not feel it his duty to inspire the lover with ardor.

CHAPTER VI.

LIVE PEOPLE AND GHOSTS.

ONE evening in June, Richard Amory, his sister and niece dined with Haliburton.

"This is merely a sort of dress rehearsal to discover whether we really could give a dinner creditably," Glen explained when he and Haliburton went over to proffer the invitation. "Before John really launches out and invites Sue, he wants to get hold of a kink or two."

"Ought we to have a sixth to balance the table, and to entertain Kitty? that is the real question," said Haliburton.

"No," Glen answered. "If we ask anybody else we should have to ask the Darrows, and John would be absent-minded, and the thing would n't go off well."

"Oh, please ask nobody but ourselves. Kitty does not want to be entertained," said the marchesa.

"I should think not," murmured Kitty.

"And then," Glen went on lashing himself into despair, "those clever women know so much — they spoil conversation. I never can get a word in edgewise. They want to keep all the talk to themselves."

"You prefer ignoramuses like Kitty and me, who look up to you," suggested Constance.

"I do, indeed."

"The thing is," said Haliburton, "we are not used to giving dinners. We want to learn how it is done."

"What is thee going to have?" inquired Richard Amory. "Now when I go out, I myself like a good dinner."

"We were discussing the menu," said Glen. "It's not the time of year for raw oysters."

"Clearly not."

"We have also decided not to have soup. It's too hot weather for soup; besides, the marchesa has such beautiful soup, we felt as if" —

"It is too hot weather for soup."

"Then, too, fresh fish is hard to get. It seemed as well to drop fish."

"I asked thee what thee was going to have. We can go without things at home."

"We almost made up our minds to have lobster."

"Thee asks a man of my age out to eat lobster!"

"Well, what do you want?" demanded Glen. "We are ready to go to almost any expense in order to entertain our friends."

The dinner, nevertheless, turned out to be good and plentiful. Haliburton and Glen sat opposite each other in the middle, and Constance and her brother had the ends of the table. Kitty, being a fifth wheel, changed her place between each

course, in order to decide which corner she preferred. It was all so unceremonious it would hardly have been worth while for her to be upon her good behavior.

Haliburton had seated Constance in the place where he had seen his mother so many years. The talk at dinner turned chiefly upon the house, and the Amburys, its former owners. Mrs. Ambury, Haliburton's grandmother, had died two weeks after Constance's first marriage, and a few months later he and his mother had come here from New York to live. This inheritance had decided the question of his career, — had made him Ambury Darrow's partner. They spoke of how our lives get made up independently of our tastes, inclinations, and determinations. Haliburton would greatly have preferred to live on in New York, but his mother said she had always been homesick for the dear old place. He disliked a suburb, considering that life is not long enough for such a dissipation of energy ; if a man has anything to do in the world, he must concentrate his powers. Yet he had lived here for almost nineteen years, until after his mother's death, not quite three years before the time of our story. Glen for once said little or nothing, and was content to listen. He experienced the pleasantness of having women in the room where he and John usually ate and drank and talked and smoked or kept silent prosaically. Constance wore something thin and airy in black ; her little white lace fichu was open at the throat, and

she seemed to him wonderfully beautiful. Kitty was in white, clear and diaphanous, and the setting sun, as it threw wonderful shafts of light and luminous reflections into the room, — making prisms in the crystal, and burnishing up the mahogany wherever it could find a surface, — lighted fires as well in the young girl's eyes, and gave her lips and the spot of red on each cheek the richness of a crimson flower. When the dusk began to gather, Dilsey, the old mulatto butler, brought lighted candles in great silver candlesticks, thrice coming in with one in each hand. It was like a religious function.

“John is fond of his six candlesticks,” said Glen.

Richard Amory knew all about the six silver candlesticks, — when, where, and how they were made out of an antique dinner-service which had been in the Ambury family when it emigrated. The endless chain of reminiscence went on as before, leaving Glen free to look and gaze and compare and remember. It is not safe always to renew even a friendship; it is sometimes impossible to find virtue in the passion which has swayed our lives when we try to take it up again. But Constance, to Glen's perceptions, had lost nothing in the long interval. She was not one of the women who make any attempt to attract, to charm. No, in her blithe, steady poise there was an element of serenity, of strength, of duration. How confidently and serenely she took life!

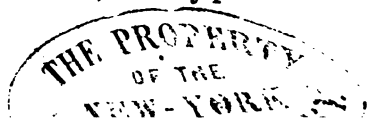
He turned occasionally from Constance to steep

himself in Kitty's vivid glow and color. Still, he said to himself that what he loved was Constance's pure, white light. He was proud of the very limitations of his feeling for her. She did not chafe, perplex, over-stimulate him; instead, she soothed his restlessness. Whether or not he had been absolutely true to his ideal of love all these twelve years, it had been constantly renewed in its naïve adoring recognition of her superiority to any other woman he had ever known. Now, seeing mother and daughter together, it suited his mood to study their likeness and unlikeness. Delicate little ripples of suggestion brought up the picture of Constance as a young girl. Kitty was eating cream ices and strawberries, accepting one plate after another, and Glen found, along with his amusement at her childish gluttony, an extreme charm in her absence of vanity or striving for effect.

"May I have another, *mamma mia*?" she would ask when Dilsey offered them, as if she were six years old.

"If there are enough," Constance would reply. "One is so hungry when one is young."

This easy acquiescence, this habitual acceptance of the prose and logic of life, was characteristic of Constance. But had she ever felt that youthful hunger and thirst? Or, feeling it, had she had a perception of a hunger unsatisfied; a thirst unquenched and unquenchable? Had she ever loved any man? Could she ever love any man? Was not her passion for Kitty the first, the only passion



of her life? Again Glen looked at Constance with this surmise in his mind; at the pure, faultless oval of the proud, perfectly cut face; the soft tints, not pale, but luminous like the hues of a pearl; the sweet look of the tranquil eyes; the charm of the lips. He could not help loving her; he blessed fate that he had had the chance of loving her; yet he knew—he suddenly felt, with a sharp, importunate quickening of understanding, that he had always known if he asked her for bread she would give him a stone. Was it because he came too late,—because, if a man wants something of his own, he must begin with the first dawn of feeling? He looked again at Kitty eating the last half dozen strawberries on her plate, huge in size, which she had saved as a *bonne bouche*. Greedy little girl, luckily far removed from any of the problems of existence. But she was distinctly pretty to-night; the white frock with its open throat gave her head a new flower-like lilt.

They went into the garden pavilion to take their coffee. Outside the house it was still as bright as day. The roses and honeysuckle, clambering everywhere, seemed to have drunk in the fire of the sun. The stone pavilion was very old with fluted pillars, and in the centre was an hour-glass on a pedestal. On one side was a fountain which had not run for years, but which Glen had cleaned out and set playing again. On the other side was the elaborate old-fashioned garden, with a mound in the centre from which diverged a maze of walks between

beds of mignonette, pinks, heliotrope, and other sweet flowers.

Constance sat down in an armchair, and arranged the cups and saucers which were laid out on the little table. The others stood about, looking up at the rich light on the old-fashioned gables and oriels of the house, all framed in a sparrow-haunted foliage of vines and creepers. Richard Amory asked some questions about the date of the main building, and he and John Haliburton, followed by Kitty, walked off to look at it over the door.

Glen had turned the hour-glass, and Constance was watching the sands run down.

"I don't quite like an hour-glass," she said presently; "it is too much like one's life."

"Not yours."

His tone made her look up at him. The fire and beauty of his face amazed her. It was the effect partly of the trick of light.

"Why, Glen!" she exclaimed, "you look exactly as you used to look when you were in Italy that summer."

"I have wondered sometimes if you ever thought of me nowadays as I was in Italy that summer," he answered, coming a step nearer.

"I never forget anything."

"Nor I where you are concerned. Is it worth while telling you over again what I told you then? Do you remember that night on the shore just after sunset?"

"Yes, dear Glen, I remember." She smiled serenely.

"May I tell you now what I told you then?"

"No; what would be the use? We were both young then, — you very much younger than I. I told you then that it was all folly, that I should never marry again, and if I said so at the age of twenty-eight, what should I say now?"

In her decision, in her easy air of superior knowledge, she showed an equanimity which amused, while it crushed him. They looked at each other for a moment, in silence.

"Oh, you are happy," he then said. "You have Kitty."

"Why have you not made some happiness for yourself?" she asked. "I have so hoped to hear that you were married to some pretty girl who would have loved you as you deserve, — some rich girl who could have helped you on."

He stretched out his arms with a gesture as if cramped and longing to get free, retreated a few steps, and sank down on the bench, still looking at Constance with a silent stare, then burst into a fit of laughter. She met his gaze, her eyes widening with expectation and interest, as if she believed he had something amusing to impart to her. But at this moment Haliburton and Richard Amory came down the path, the latter telling a long story about a vision which had appeared to the late Mrs. Ambury. She was only two-and-forty when it happened, and she lived to be eighty-one, yet she had carried to her grave an intense conviction of its reality.

Kitty was profoundly impressed by the story.

"Do you understand, mamma?" she said. "Mrs. Ambury's son Tom, Mr. Haliburton's uncle, was eighteen years old. They were afraid he was in danger of going into a decline, and he was sent to the West Indies, — to Jamaica. The night he died he appeared to his mother as she sat here — just here where you are now."

As Haliburton approached the pavilion he had caught the look of excessive discomfiture with which Glen turned away from the marchesa, and now, glancing at her, he felt sure that she was a little troubled and perplexed, although her face was reassuring in its bright sweetness. With her easy way of bridging over an awkward interval, Constance at once said, —

"One does not actually believe that such a thing happened, yet there are hundreds of just such stories fully vouched for and authenticated."

Kitty, looking at Glen, observed something in his look and posture which suggested that he had been thrown off his balance by her account of the apparition.

"Do you believe it?" she inquired.

"Believe it? Believe in the ghost? Yes," said Glen. "I myself have been haunted for years. Why should n't other people be?"

"Oh, what is your ghost, cousin Glen?" demanded Kitty, with dilated eyes.

"Kitty," said Glen, "there is positively something uncanny about you at times. At this mo-

ment you seem to be looking at me with the insight of a thousand years."

"But I want to hear about the ghost," Kitty explained.

"It is the ghost of Glendenning Rennie," he returned. "It is the most tiresome ghost in the world. I'd change him willingly for the ghost of a pretty woman."

"Do you mean," Kitty demanded, altogether puzzled, "that you are haunted by your own ghost?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"How does it come?"

"The moment I go into my own room there he is. He looks out of the glass at me. Sometimes, when I am tying my cravat, I say to myself, 'Some day I shall have to shoot that fellow.' He is lying on my pillow when I go to bed, and pours out his hopes and his fears, his sins and his passions and his remorse. He has haunted me through endless feverish nights. Oh yes, I am afraid to be alone in the dark," he added, with a shiver. He kept his eyes on Constance.

"Every person has his or her own ghost story to tell," she said in her easy way. "Does anybody wish to hear mine?"

"I never should have expected you to have a ghost, Conny," Glen observed in a tone of some irony.

"No, I am too matter of fact," she returned promptly. "It is somebody else's ghost story with which I was to a certain degree mixed up."

"Tell it," said Richard Amory, "and then I will tell thee an experience that has haunted me through my life."

"Tell it," said Haliburton.

They had finished drinking their coffee. Dilsey took away the empty cups. It had grown darker, but the west was still alight, and the moon, almost at its first quarter, made its faint light felt.

"A good many years ago," Constance began, "I made a friend in Rome, a Mrs. Ponsonby, an Englishwoman. She was a widow, and a friend of my husband's, an Italian gentleman of good family, became interested in her, and wished to marry her. She was in some doubt whether or not to accept his offer. She was uncertain how a second marriage would affect the terms of her settlements. At any rate, she wished to know exactly how she stood, and, in order to consult certain solicitors, she was obliged to go to England. She had in her possession valuable jewels which had belonged to her husband's mother. She spoke of them to me, and said she was not sure whether Mr. Ponsonby had actually given them to her, or whether as heirlooms they belonged to the Ponsonby family. She had expected to take them with her, but at the last moment decided to leave them behind. As it was too late to deposit the jewels with a banker, she asked me to keep them until her return, or, in case she made up her mind to surrender them, I was to forward them to London. Well, she left Rome, and, in crossing France, was killed in a terrible rail-

way accident. The van took fire, and the luggage was consumed."

"And you had her jewels," said Glen. "I see the point of the story. They would have been supposed to have been burned up in her trunks."

"Precisely. The first information I had of her death was an item in the London 'Times' which went on to say that valuable family heirlooms had been lost at the time of Mrs. Ponsonby's death. They were described at length, and much regret was expressed that such unique jewels should have been lost. Not a soul on earth, not even my husband, knew that they were in my possession. Now was not that rather an interesting situation?"

"I should have thought so if I had been in your shoes," said Glen. "Why do I never have a chance?"

"Were they actually fine jewels?" Haliburton asked.

"Some really beautiful rubies, and a necklace of emeralds and diamonds; four bracelets, a string of pearls, and rings and brooches of all sorts. Really quite a possession."

"What did thee do, Constance?" asked Richard Amory.

"I simply wrote to Mrs. Ponsonby's solicitors in England, whose address she had given me, and told them the jewels were in my hands. The droll part of my story is that Mrs. Ponsonby's sister, Mrs. Darcy, was quite incensed with me for acting without having first communicated with her. She

said, as the jewels were supposed to have been lost, it was quite unnecessary to inform the Ponsonby family of their existence and whereabouts, for as there was no direct heir, they went to a remote cousin who was already too rich to live, and thus benefited nobody — whereas ” —

“ If you had kept them yourself ” —

“ No, this Mrs. Darcy felt that they belonged to her, and to substantiate this presumption she told me that on the morning this railway accident happened she awoke in the gray dawn and saw her sister, Mrs. Ponsonby, standing by her bedside with these jewels in her hands, saying, ‘ Jane, these are for you. I always intended them for you. ’ ”

“ If this be madness there ’s method in it,” observed Glen.

“ The dead woman should have appeared to thee, sister,” said Richard Amory, “ and given thee her instructions.”

“ If she had appeared,” answered Constance, “ and told me not to send the jewels to her solicitors but to give them to her sister, I wonder what I should have decided it was my duty to do? ”

“ She did not come,” said Haliburton. “ And if she had, I hardly think it would have altered the point of law.”

“ I suspect that I am not one of the people who see ghosts,” said Constance. “ If I did see one ” —

“ You would dismiss him — thus,” said Glen, with a little wave of the hand.

“ I will tell thee my own ghost story, sister,” said

Richard Amory. "Thee may or may not believe it, but it came to pass when I was twenty-three years old. I had been working rather hard, — so they said; I had been reading law in Judge Parker's office, and at the same time copying and serving an apprenticeship to his business. I went off on a holiday. It was a very hot summer, and I wanted a cool climate and some fishing, besides a chance for pleasant excursions on horseback and on foot. Well, I had heard of such a place in Vermont. I went there and engaged a room, — a room, by the way, on the ground floor, although that is of no sort of importance. I expected to find other boarders, — I did not expect to like them. I felt awkward and unfriendly, escaped them and their overtures as much as I could, and must soon have established a reputation in the house for unsociability, since I barely returned greetings and rarely or never spoke at table. Opposite me there sat a young woman, who, from her being directly under my eyes, became particularly obnoxious. She had reddish golden hair which shone round her head like an aureole. She was far from handsome, her nose was large and wide, her mouth was large and too smiling, her eyes were full of brightness and mischief. All this might have been borne" —

"Easily, I should think," Glen put in.

"But what jarred on my nerves more and more each day was her laugh, — a very strange laugh, not unmusical, but yet unnatural. It seemed to

show no innocent mirth, but sounded as if she had some secret reason for finding amusement in what she saw and heard. I never exchanged a word with this girl. I never looked at her except as she came directly under my eyes as she sat opposite me at meals. I will confess that it seemed to me that she regarded me somewhat too pertinaciously. I felt it with discomfort, — with an embarrassment which often hindered my free play with my knife and fork. A meal was an ordeal for which I had to brace myself. I sometimes thought of asking the landlady to change my seat at table. Yet even if I grew more unpleasantly conscious of dislike of this girl's proximity, still it seemed to me that, as I should still hear her laugh wherever I sat, I preferred, perhaps, to face her."

"Now was n't there a subtle attraction?" demanded Glen.

"Attraction or repulsion — or both. Thee will see. I had been in the house almost two weeks. One afternoon I set out on a long tramp with my rod and line. I caught no fish, and as it came on to rain when I was nine miles away, I got drenched to the skin long before I reached the boarding-house, and besides lost my way and was considerably belated. I entered unseen; no one came forward to offer me a meal, and I decided that I preferred to go to bed supperless rather than ring and ask for it. I undressed and went to bed expecting instantly to drop asleep from fatigue. On the contrary I felt restless, uncomfortable; I

turned from side to side finding it impossible to relax and gain ease. I bitterly regretted not having found some one and insisted on having a meal. I was not only awake, but so wide awake I was certain I could not close my eyes in slumber all night. I lighted a candle, looked at my watch. It was ten minutes past eleven. The various sounds in the house had died away, and I knew that everybody else was at rest. Perhaps now repose would come to me. I put out my light and lay down quietly on my pillow. All at once a noise outside struck my ear. I seemed to hear the latch of my door lifted; then came a sound which I could not mistake, — the sound of *that girl's* laugh, as if she had leaned down and laughed through the keyhole. I started as if at a shock from an electric battery. I gazed towards the door, and what corroborated my belief that she was standing outside was that I distinctly saw a ray of light appear through the chink. As I looked the light increased, — the door opened; the whole room was illuminated. The girl entered, holding a lighted candle in one hand, partly shading it with the fingers of the other. She walked slowly towards me, — she approached the bed; she fixed her eyes on mine; she was smiling broadly; as she drew near she leaned down and laughed in my ear. I not only heard her laugh, I saw her face, — I saw the red-gold aureole of her hair, — I saw the pink light through the parting of her fingers. Angry, horror-stricken, I started up in bed. The

light vanished ; she vanished. I lighted my own candle. I examined the room. I was alone. The door was as I had left it, locked and bolted."

Richard Amory paused, and looked from one to the other of his audience as if for a guarantee that his story was making an impression. Each face, white in the dusk, was turned eagerly towards him. He went on : —

"I said to myself it had been an ugly dream, I had had a nightmare. I went once more to bed. I turned on my right side. I closed my eyes. No sooner had I done so than I heard the click at the latch, — the laugh at the door. I looked and saw the ray of light through the chink of the keyhole. Again the door opened, the figure appeared, shading the candle with her hand. She leaned down ; I could feel her breath ; she laughed in my ear. Again I started up, — again the figure vanished. I rose, relighted my candle, examined the door and found it fast. I took a blanket, rolled myself in it, sat down in the old-fashioned bedside chair, and went to sleep. When I awoke it was broad daylight, — the candle was burned to the socket."

"Had the girl died in the night ?"

"Far from it. She was at the breakfast-table."

"The effect of going to bed supperless and feverish from cold and exposure," Haliburton suggested.

"That is the logical explanation," said Richard Amory. "And I can assure thee, John, I comforted myself by it all that day. But on the

following night I went to bed after a substantial meal and the same experience was renewed."

"What did you do about it?"

"Packed my effects and left the house soon after sunrise," said Richard Amory. "It seemed to me that it was time."

"I should certainly have stayed on," said Glen. "Oh, I wish thee had stayed on, cousin Richard. Never did I hear before of a good Quaker so bewitched."

"But, uncle Richard, what was it?" demanded Kitty. "It could n't be a ghost if she was still alive."

CHAPTER VII.

SPIRITS IN THE AIR.

THEY had gone into the house after Richard Amory finished his story. Haliburton opened the piano, and asked Constance for some music. When she rose from the instrument, after playing for half an hour, Glen, who was sitting in the French window, called to them to look at the lightning flashes in the west.

"It will show beautifully from the top of the hill," he added. "Kitty, come out with me and see it."

"May I go with cousin Glen, mamma?" the young girl asked.

"Why, certainly go," Constance replied. "But do not stay too long."

Constance turned back to her brother and John Haliburton, and they went on discussing ghosts, and the state of mind and nerves which led to seeing them.

"I'm so glad to get out under the sky," Glen was saying to Kitty. "These hot summer nights were not made to spend beneath roofs. Feel that breath of hot wind! In Italy you would say the sirocco was blowing. There is electricity in the

air. There is an agitation in one's nervous centres ; quick currents of irritation run up and down one's spine."

"I know," said Kitty. "Imps seem to be pinching one."

"In other words, I feel cross."

"With me?"

"Oh dear, no, — not you, Kitty. It's myself I hate."

She looked at him with concern.

A walk bordered with rows of box led to the brook ; and after they had crossed the bridge, they followed a narrower footpath till they reached the top of a sort of bluff, where was a hedge and a stile. They mounted the steps and sat down on the upper one, which commanded quite an extensive view, for the woods dropped away to the west ; out towards the north they could see the wide reaches of the valley.

Over the farther hills a tract of sky still kept a reminder of the sunset glow, and the moon, declining, continually swathed and unswathed itself in shining vapors. Opposite, a great bank of cloud was played over by sheet lightning.

"Do you care about music, Kitty?" Glen asked, after they had sat for a few minutes in silence.

"I care about music?"

"I hoped you did not. Does your mother take what she plays to heart, do you think?"

Kitty turned and stared at him.

"Yes," she said succinctly ; then, after a mo-

ment, added, "She says sometimes that she is too old to play Chopin, — that certain composers are for youth."

"I am old enough, I suppose, to be a dried-up mummy," said Glen. "Still, that George Sand waltz always makes a harpstring of me."

"Chopin wrote it when he was in love with George Sand?"

"Ye-es."

"And he died?"

"Yes, he died."

"I wonder," said Kitty, "if she could ever endure to hear it played afterwards?"

"You see," returned Glen, "George Sand's harp had so many strings, and they had all been twanged so many times."

"If," said Kitty, with a note of acute feeling in her voice, "if anybody had ever loved me, and had written anything so sweet, — if I had heard it after he was dead I should simply" —

"Well, simply what?" asked Glen, as she broke off.

"I was going to say die. But, after all, one does not die from pure emotion unless one has a heart disease, I suppose. Mamma tells me to say always precisely what I mean, but that is not so easy."

"A little hyperbole does help one amazingly."

"For example, mamma says it is not worth while to call anything eternal that only lasts two days."

"Good for Conny! I adore her sublime com-

mon sense. Nevertheless, some things are eternal. And although one may not die at the opportune moment, death comes finally. Pile on phrases as one may, one does n't begin to express the possible pain of life. Nothing but music can. Chopin loved George Sand dearly, and he had to give her up and — other things. When he was dying he said, 'Put some violets in my room!' It was foolish, of course, but I, too, am made that way." Glen spoke with a curious fervor, as if justifying himself against reproach. Then, when he saw the reflection of his intensity on Kitty's face, he added in a different voice: "I was strolling through Père Lachaise last year, and came upon Chopin's grave; on the flat stone lay a perfectly fresh bunch of heliotrope, still sprayed over with moisture. Had I been ten minutes earlier I must have seen whoever it was put it there. Was it some young girl passionately enamored of his music, or some old woman who had loved Chopin in her youth?"

"It was a young girl," cried Kitty. "I am sure it was a young girl."

"I wish I had seen her. I have been curious about it ever since," said Glen. He pointed to the northwest. "See that cloud,—it is coming up swiftly. I fancy there is rain in it."

"I love to lie in bed and hear it rain," said Kitty. "Before it comes, when the clouds are flying and the wind roars and the trees crash together, I like to be out of doors. But rain quiets me."

"Your mother plays the Raindrop Prelude?"

"Oh yes; so do I." Glen shivered.

"I'm so tired of this brain, of these nerves," he said. "I should like to be born over again and consulted beforehand; I assure you, Kitty, I would have quite a different body from this."

Kitty gazed at him startled.

"Sometimes," he went on, "I am quite contented with myself, view my limitations indulgently; but to-night it is as if something had exploded within me, and all my vanity, all my self-belief, is blown to the four winds."

"Oh, I cannot bear to have you utter such speeches," she faltered.

"Kitty, you don't know what it is to be almost forty years old, — to feel that you have wasted your youth, your strength, — that you can look forward to no harvest, because you have not planted and watered. I never grasped the realities of life. Indeed, they have never existed where I am concerned. I don't know the real from the ideal."

She continued to listen with an intense sympathy expressed in her whole face. He accepted the sensibility of her eyes, her parted lips.

"You pity me, don't you, dear little Kitty?" he said. "You don't tell me when I make my yawp at the universe that it's all my own fault. Ah!"

"It thunders!" Kitty exclaimed.

"Come," said Glen. "Your mother will be sending for you."

He held out his hand, Kitty clasped it, and off they started at a scamper down the hill. Looking

up as they reached the little bridge, they could see that the canopy of cloud was approaching the zenith; that it had quite swallowed up some of the stars, while others vanished and reappeared, — vanished and then shone out again, as the heralding scuds of vapor hurried past them.

“Hear the wind roar in the trees,” said Glen. “It is like a hungry wild beast, is it not?”

“Let us run, let us run,” said Kitty, and on they went. Constance was waiting for them on the terrace. Richard Amory, casting an experienced glance up at the heavens, said it would not rain for half an hour yet. Haliburton waited to see if Glen was going; then, when he heard him bid Constance good-night, he himself walked on at her side.

“Will thee take my arm, Kitty?” Richard Amory asked his niece.

She put her hand on his coat-sleeve, then drew it away.

“It is so very hot, uncle.”

“Very well, monkey. Thee shall walk as thee pleases, and I will walk as I please.”

As they entered the woods Kitty rushed forward as if she had wings. The wind seemed to sweep her along. She wished it would bear her aloft. She longed to be part of the force which made the branches and leaves all struggle and rustle together. The woods were dark, but from time to time the lightning flashed through the openings in the leafy dome above; once it flooded the whole solitude with almost midday splendor.

"Kitty!" called Richard Amory. "Where is thee, Kitty?"

She darted towards him out of the silent shades.

"Does thee think to thyself," he asked, "that in this darkness, in this approaching tempest, thee is still something? That even though to-morrow thee shall die, still at this moment thee feels the grandeur of nature — of the universe?"

Meanwhile Haliburton walked beside Constance watching for the flashes of lightning that he might see her face framed in the lace mantilla. The very charm of the moment troubled him; he had been conscious to-night of something unusual in Glen's look, tone, and manner. It was not like Glen to have resigned so easily the chance of this walk home; and his mind began to be engrossed in a slow wrestle with the idea that this was the time and opportunity for him to make a sort of appeal for Glen.

For Haliburton to see any possible duty was to feel tormented until he had done all he might to acquit himself of it. That he should bring himself to earth with his own arrow was no matter.

Constance had made some remark, to which he replied, —

"Yes, marchesa," when she exclaimed, —

"Why should you address me by that title?"

"What shall I call you, then?"

"Call me Constance. Everybody calls me Constance here. We are all in some sort cousins, — not to say Quakers."

"I shall be glad to call you Constance," Haliburton said. "I may as well confess that I call you Constance to myself, sometimes even aloud to Glen."

"Fate throws us all together again," she observed. "It has given me a feeling of destiny, of the immutable and inevitable,—in coming back where my childhood began, as if this, and this only, were my real home."

"I should like to feel that you regard even me as an old friend, for there is something I wish to say which lies very near my heart," said Haliburton.

She looked up at him with a startled curiosity.

Irrationally he suddenly experienced a dread of what he had to say. All the more he felt that it must be uttered.

"I want to speak to you about Glen," he said.

"About Glen?" she repeated.

"Perhaps you think I have not the right," Haliburton went on almost impetuously. "But remember that Glen is very near to me, very dear; he is my nephew, but the actual tie is more as if he were a brother, a son. Nothing in the world would make me so happy as to see him happy."

"Is he not happy?" she asked, with something of nonchalance in her tone. "He seems to me blithe and light-hearted."

"You know he is not happy. You know that for twelve years he has needed you to make him happy," said Haliburton. "Why not reward his constancy?"

She was silent for the long moment that Hali-burton waited, expecting some response. Then, as if he had not yet delivered his full message, he went on: —

“Of course you cannot feel for him as I do. He was always with us at Christmas when he was a child. I have filled his stocking many a time. Once in the country, when he was learning to skate, he fell through a hole in the ice, and I carried him back to the house in my arms, — a good two miles, — at first in doubt whether, after all, I had not been too late to save him. One does not get over the pull at the heart such experiences give one.”

“No,” said Constance sweetly and thoughtfully. “I can readily understand that Glen is peculiarly dear to you. In fact, we all love him.”

“He was a little spoiled by his own mother; my mother did her best to spoil him utterly,” Hali-burton went on, as if compelled to speak. “Some people say he is an egoist; if so, he is the most lovable of egoists. And in spite of his egoism, he has got so little out of the world, — nothing, in fact, except his long, hopeless feeling for you.”

He paused. They were crossing the lawn. Richard Amory and Kitty had far outstripped them, and they stood quite alone. The wind, which had roared through the trees while they were in the wood, now came in fitful gusts; above, the heavy massing clouds were torn apart by it, and here and there a star shone for a moment, then was blotted

out. She had stopped, faced about in the path, and now said, —

“Do I understand, Mr. Haliburton, that you are urging me to marry Glen?”

He, too, had stopped short; she had extended her bare, warm hand with a little gesture, and he, perhaps a little confused, took it; then, clasping it, he stood still, staring at her.

“Are you in earnest in wishing me to marry him?” she said again.

He pressed her hand to his breast. Something seemed to paralyze him. To see her standing there close, looking up at him, while he felt the joy of that touch, almost overcame him; he could not keep down the throbs of his heart. To say “No” was false; to say “Yes” was falser still. Nevertheless, her simple, practical question had to be recognized and met.

“It is an awkward thing to say,” he faltered, “but although Glen is not a rich man, he will always have a sufficient income as long as he lives. That he is poor is not because he is incapable of earning money like other men, but because he has had little use or need of it.”

She laughed softly. “You are very generous,” she said. “I do consider you the most faithful and most generous of men. I understand, then, that you insist on my marrying him?”

“If you will marry him, Constance, I shall be very glad. He has loved you long and faithfully; if any man were to stand in his way, thwart, or

hinder him in his suit to you, that man must be no better than a miserable traitor."

She drew her hand away from his, turned, and walked on.

"You are no traitor," she said in a calm, reasonable tone. "You have done your best for Glen in all ways. I have no intention of marrying. How can any woman make a third marriage? A second is bad enough. Kitty and I are happy together. I can say no more now. Perhaps, some time, I may feel like telling you more candidly how I have always felt towards Glen, — how I still feel. He is like a dear younger brother to me. Ah, the thunder is getting nearer. Good-night."

They shook hands on the terrace. She went in at once, and Haliburton turned on the instant and strode towards home.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GAME OF THREE.

It was a race, but Haliburton beat the advancing rain by a yard. Running up the steps, he felt the patter of the first drop. Entering the house, he looked through the rooms; then, not finding Glen, came out again, and discovered him huddled up in the corner of the bench in the porch. Haliburton waited, thinking he might be asleep.

"How long you were gone!" Glen said, suddenly opening his eyes.

"We did not walk fast, but I simply took the marchesa to Waldstein. Why did you not go with her? I waited, expecting you would do so."

"I had already made a fool of myself once," said Glen. He jumped up. "When have I not made a fool of myself?" He strode about, beating his temples with his fists. "Let's play cards," he said, with a note of savage feeling in his voice. "One can't go to bed with this infernal hubbub going on."

As he spoke a flash of lightning showed his face, — it was pale to ghastliness.

"Are you ill, Glen?" Haliburton inquired anxiously.

"I have felt horribly nervous all the evening. However, it is hard to tell what is soul and what body, and Conny would say that something at dinner probably disagreed with me. She is so sensible."

He laughed ironically. John put his hand on Glen's arm.

"I'm afraid something went wrong between you," he said.

"Did she allude to it?"

"We spoke of you, but she made no allusion to anything you had said to her."

"Did she say that she wished I had married?"

"No."

"She said it to me, — wished I had married some rich, pretty girl who would have helped me on in the world."

"She meant that instead of wasting your life in a dream you had made ties, had a family, and felt the need of concentrating your powers."

"Of course she is most wise and sensible. Why have I not made ties? She knows perfectly well that I have not been able to get her out of my head."

"You offered yourself to her, and she declined the proposal."

"She knows that did not end it."

"It must end it for a man when a woman says she prefers not to marry him. Constance, at any rate, is no coquette."

"No, I acquit her of coquetry. I also acquit her of knowing anything about love."

"She has the whitest soul of any woman alive," Haliburton insisted, with some heat.

"I like that phrase," said Glen, pausing after he had strode about for five minutes to get rid of his uncontrollable restlessness. "A white soul. Yes, she has a white soul; she has a good conscience; she has even a warm heart. She is beautiful; you can't say merely that she is pretty, clever, or fascinating. Somehow she is in herself so complete, her cleverness, prettiness, and charm are simply an inevitable part of her, like her pretty hands and feet. But this lovely white creature is cold."

"How dare a man say that a woman is cold until" —

"Compare her with Kitty," said Glen.

"Compare her with Kitty!" Haliburton repeated, with disdain.

"Of course Kitty is a child, but she has a heart; Conny has none. I had suspected it before; to-night I know it. I felt ready to cry out, imploring, like Dives, that this white creature should stoop out of heaven and touch me with her cool finger. In fact, I did cry out" —

"What did she do?"

"Brought a whole bucket of ice-water," said Glen.

John, in his own mood of passionate exaltation, could not tell whether Glen actually suffered or simply spent emotion in words. He did not speak.

"She knows nothing of the feeling she inspires," Glen went on. "She looks at me, speaks to me,

just as she speaks to you and looks at you. Did you observe her to-night as she brought us each the cup of coffee she had poured out? When she offers anything she seems to be giving part of herself, — her eyes, her smiles, the very way her little hands are held out, — all is generous bounty. And yet she gives nothing — nothing — nothing. That is, it is just simply a part of herself to have that exquisite sweetness, — that gracious largess. She cares not who receives, — you, I, or old Dick Amory.”

The outburst was so impetuous, the torrent of words so violent, Haliburton could only smile at the climax.

“That is why she is so admirable,” he returned.

“Oh, if you feel like that” — Glen began, then gazing into the darkness, he saw a figure emerge out of the shrubberies.

“Who is there?” demanded Haliburton.

“Only I — Edward Darrow,” said a youthful voice. “It is beginning to rain. I saw you on the porch, and stopped to borrow an umbrella.”

“Come in, Teddy,” said Glen, with animation. “I was just asking John to play cards, and a party of three will be jollier. We will have a midnight orgy. We will waste John’s substance in riotous living. Are there any cards in the house, I wonder?”

Teddy demurred slightly, then came a torrent of rain along with a crash of thunder, and he yielded. The three went in, turned up the lights, and began

rummaging in the cabinet. It was Glen who found the cards, and he and Teddy pushed out a card-table, while Haliburton and Dilsey busied themselves in the pantry.

"Something cold, cold, cold," said Glen, as Dilsey brought a bowl of cracked ice and some bottles of seltzer. "What is it you have got, John? Champagne? Why, you good old fellow! Big glasses, Dilsey. Fill them to the brim with ice, then pour in the seltzer, and just dash it with the champagne. This is one of the sweet, fiery cups of Circe. No matter if it does make us go on all fours. I only wish it might transform me. I'm sick of trying to walk upright on two legs, and be a man. Did it ever occur to you how all the old mythology and all the old folk-lore legends turn on a metamorphosis? Yet the ancients did not need transformation. They could fight hard, — no matter in what shape; fight with teeth and claws if need be, — and eat and drink and sleep and wallow and drag their gods down to their level. They never knew what it was to be the prey of a feeling they dared not put into action. We moderns are never quite sure whether what knocks at the gate of soul and sense is a devouring dragon or an angel with a message. Well, no matter; shuffle the cards. What shall we play? What can three people play? Poker? Euchre? Monte? What is your game, John? Nothing but whist? I might have expected it. What you do is certain to be respectable, safe, — no putting all you hold precious at

the hazard of a die. But, after all, there's no game like whist. I'll play with a dummy. Teddy, draw up a chair for my invisible partner. We will be polite and not name him. He and I against you both. What are points?" Glen drew out a handful of silver, and laid it on the table opposite. "Dummy has the first deal," he said. "Cut, Teddy."

He dealt the cards, glanced hastily through his own hand, chuckled, then, with his long lithe fingers, languidly laid out the suits opposite.

Haliburton replenished the glass which Glen had thirstily drained.

"Here's to our hand," Glen said, drinking to the empty chair. "We have it all between us. Who was it said Death was a sure partner?"

"A man with a new cemetery," suggested Teddy.

"You fellows will have two tricks, — no more," said Glen. He set down his glass. "You play, John. Two of hearts," he called to Dummy. "Here comes the ace; put your king on, Teddy. Now for your trumps, partner. Here go the next five tricks. Ah, you missed it then! You might have saved that club. I gave you two tricks, but you have a single beggarly one. Dummy, my friend, you and I against the world. Shall we double the stakes?"

"We might as well hand over. It's a regular case of 'stand and deliver,'" said Teddy. "You have it all your own way. We must follow where

you lead. The laurels are all yours, Glen, to say nothing of our spare cash. Well, lucky at cards, unlucky at love."

"You mean that I am unlucky at love?" said Glen, as if stung. "That you and John are" —

"I meant nothing — nothing — nothing in the world except that you have your hand in our pockets, and it hurts," said Teddy, with perfect calm and patience. "Don't try to flatter me into the belief that I am lucky in love."

"Don't fling it in my face that I am unlucky," said Glen. "Of course I know it; but don't hammer it down too hard. Don't turn the knife in the gaping wound."

"I had n't the faintest idea you were in love," Teddy ventured, with an air of making apology.

"Confound it, I am not," Glen declared. "That is, not with any woman. What I'm in love with are the good things of life out of my reach."

"I should say you had most good things within your reach."

"What, in heaven's name?"

"You are the handsomest and most delightful fellow I know," said Teddy, with a little gesture of deprecation, lest he should be saying too much.

"Besides good looks," said Haliburton, "you have your share of talent."

"Genius," insisted Teddy.

"I have always considered you the luckiest of men, Glen," Haliburton proceeded, "that is, in

your natural endowments. If you have played with your chances a little" —

Glen burst into a fit of laughter.

"I've been posing to myself as a played-out individual," he said. "Suppose I were to waylay Destiny and bid her stand and deliver, take a turn, and go in for fortune?"

"I'd throw up my hat. I'd eat it for pure joy."

"That's a generous old John."

"It's your turn," said Teddy.

Glen played through the hand mechanically. He and Dummy took every trick.

"Oh, hang cards!" said the winner. "This simulacrum of luck bores me. I would rather talk. What have you been doing, Teddy?"

"I went to cousin Richard Amory's."

"Did you find them?"

"They were out, but I waited. Gatty had sent a message. They finally came in."

"A pity you did not know they were all dining here," suggested Haliburton. "I almost sent you an invitation, Teddy, — wanting a partner for Kitty, — but we decided to begin in a small way."

"Oh, I wish you had," said Teddy, with such a heightening of color and kindling of glance that Haliburton and Glen exchanged a look of understanding.

Glen had left his chair, and now threw himself on a divan, piling a dozen bright-colored cushions

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behind him. His whole mood, from being querulous, had changed, and was touched with audacity and mischief.

"That girl is going to be pretty, Ted. Don't you think so?" he asked.

"She is pretty now, I think," Teddy murmured, "and so talented."

"Talented? Is she talented? I had n't thought of her being anything except a splendid Greek head set on top of a beanpole."

"She is thin," Teddy conceded, "but she is simply the most graceful creature I ever saw."

"She has ~~got~~ a pair of eyes," Glen pursued. "One of these days they will make the dry fuel in somebody blaze up into a conflagration."

Teddy flushed angrily. "She is so well educated," he observed primly. "She speaks four languages, and plays on three instruments."

"Very badly."

"It does n't so much matter. I like her taking a violin up to the top of a tree, and playing it."

"I should rather she did not frighten the birds away," suggested Glen. "Or does she pose as Orpheus?"

"She could n't pose," said Teddy.

"She is a tricky sprite," Haliburton remarked, as Glen did not answer, but fell to thumping the cushions, clearly bored with the young fellow's enthusiasm. To think, Glen mused, extending himself at full length and staring at the ceiling, — to think of Kitty's having a lover! He sud-

denly recalled the cool, satin touch of Kitty's slim fingers, as they slid into his hand, and every incident of his talk with the young girl — while they watched the lightning and the moon covering and uncovering her face — came back clear-cut, fresh, interesting. In spite of his ill luck he had distanced Teddy; this solemn youngster would have had to look and stare for six months before Kitty would have trusted him as she trusted Glen.

"Let's suppose a case," he burst out as if continuing the subject. "Suppose each one of us knew he had but a year to live, what should we each desire most?"

"Only a year to live?" repeated Teddy, aghast.

"I don't suppose you young fellows read Balzac or Goethe. But there have been stories told in which the devil offered an unhappy young fellow a year's fulfillment of his heart's desire."

"Is Satan at your elbow with such a proposition?" Haliburton asked.

"Granted that he was, and that he offered you, without limit, love, wealth, literary ambition" —

"For only a year? A year is so short," said Haliburton.

"You spoiled child of good luck! Three hundred and sixty-five days of happiness! Did you ever in your life know what it was to be happy for sixty consecutive minutes?"

"If I could only be happy for a year," said Teddy, "I should see a ghost the whole time, and it would make me profoundly miserable."

"I don't know what you mean by happiness," said Haliburton.

"I don't mean being passively well off, well fed, comfortable, — but happy. As if you were a god; as if this world, with all its possible delights, were made for you, — not for other men, but for *you*."

Without actual change of feature Haliburton's face still showed a certain difference in expression.

"Of course," Glen went on, pressing the point roguishly, "when a man thinks of happiness he is sure of a friendly hand within reach with permission to take it in his own, and that hand must belong to a woman — to the woman he loves, and whose heart is unalterably his."

Teddy blushed again furiously, jumped up, and strode to the window.

"It is pouring," he said.

"If that is your definition of happiness," observed Haliburton, with the glimmer of a smile in his eyes and on his lips, "I see no ghost of a chance for myself."

"No ghost of a chance?" said Glen. "Twenty women would jump at you."

"I don't flatter myself to that degree."

"Modest John. But confess that you would like it" —

"Twenty women jumping at me! I should rather think not."

"No; I mean having the one who did n't jump." Haliburton shook his head.

"He won't confess it," shouted Glen in high glee; "it is like calling the statue of the *commendatore* off the pedestal."

"Try Teddy; he is of the age to understand such things."

"Well, Teddy" —

"I told you I should n't like happiness for one single year," Teddy said, with conviction.

"Not a pretty little wife" —

"I'm not old enough to be married," Teddy returned, with a half shrug. "I've ~~not~~ to finish my course at college, go through the law school, and make some money first."

"How sensible he is, how sane!" cried Glen, his brows puckering. "He won't sell his soul, as most of us do, fifty times over, and get beaten at the bargain."

"Before a boat-race or a cricket-match," Teddy now conceded, "I might be tempted."

"Teddy," said Glen, "I wish that I were you."

"Young and strong?"

"I see you don't return the compliment."

"Teddy is like me," said Haliburton; "not used to mental gymnastics, turning spiritual somersaults, spinning spiders' webs out of one's own vitals. You are the man of imagination, Glen. Tell us what you would sell your soul for."

"I feel at this moment as if it were not worth sixpence. Sometimes it is so infernally hard to make believe that anything is worth the candle." Glen closed his eyes and mused. "Love!" he

went on presently. "What is love? A meal where you eat or where you are eaten! A tiger-hunt, — you hunt the tiger or the tiger hunts you. I know one thing, — no woman ever cared a button about me, and never will. That sort of happiness is quite out of my reach. I might say I wanted my poems to run into twenty editions, that my hard words might become shibboleths, my photographs sell by thousands, my admirers form a Glen Rennie society, — but if I were as successful as that I should know I was a fraud. Wealth and perdition afterwards, — what is wealth good for any way? A fellow can't eat two breakfasts and two dinners. The fact is, one requires a dogmatic belief in the power of the devil in order to feel the requisite belief in the temptation. But those fables show what lies in the heart of man."

Teddy, still standing at the window, pointed outside, uttering an exclamation. One flash of lightning followed another, and the whole place was as bright as day. They could see the walks in the garden like foaming brooks, and long spouts of water descending from the roofs and gables. Then came loud thunder crashing from cloud to cloud, and the wind, as if answering the challenge, roared among the trees. All three had gathered at the window, looking into inky blackness and listening to the swirls of gusty rain mingling with the sobs of the alternately lulling and reviving wind. Then the lightnings blazed forth again, illuminating the lawn and shrubberies, the flower-

beds, and the summer-house where they had sat and told stories.

Glen seemed to see Kitty's sleek, black head restlessly turning on the pillow while she heard the rain and the wind and thunder and longed to be out in the wild uproar.

He put his hand on Teddy's shoulder.

"So you've ~~put~~ all your life planned out," he said.

"Of course a fellow has to have it all in his mind."

"You are going to study law?"

"He's coming in with us," said Haliburton; "that is, as soon as he is through the law school."

"Everything is ready-made for you."

"I hope so."

"Little wife and all."

"Oh, I don't mean that," said Teddy, blushing to his eyes.

There had come a sudden lull in the storm. He decided to set forth. Haliburton offered him a bed, but he said his mother would be anxious. They watched him plunge into the black gulf outside. The shower had passed on: the lightning played in the east; the thunder still muttered, but was retreating farther and farther away.

CHAPTER IX.

GLEN'S STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

GLEN was ill for several days after the dinner-party, and Sue Darrow came over and nursed him. He had taken cold, and it resulted in one of the sharp feverish attacks to which, from childhood, he had been subject, and which put him for a few hours, at least, in a critical condition, serving to show on how fine a needle's point his chances of life were balanced.

This particular attack roused a terrible sense of fatality in Haliburton. It was impossible not to ascribe it to the evening's experience, and it seemed as if the high pulse, the intense fever and struggle for breath, were the result of the tragic pang of Glen's heartbreak over Constance. Some instinct had made Haliburton go into Glen's room at dawn to see if his windows were shut, — for the weather had grown cool, — and the signs of disorder — a book turned down on its face, a handkerchief drenched in cologne, all the pillows and cushions piled as high as it was possible to make them — gave John a horrible feeling. It was hard for him to realize that Glen was not in danger. Life and consciousness seemed ebbing to their last

remnant. It was no difficult matter to believe that the almost spent forces fluttered helpless; that they would soon be past seeing, past hearing, past sense of touch and recognition, without power of recuperation; that Glen's life would be a breath spending itself in vain, a flame just at the point of extinguishment, a feather going forth into the wind, — whither?

With all his love for Glen excited to an ideal intensity, a passionate exaltation, Haliburton hung over him for three hours, and then, at eight o'clock, to have Sue Darrow appear in cap and apron, arrange the pillows comfortably, drop and administer the restoratives which the hastily summoned doctor had by this time sent, was as exquisite a relief as he had ever experienced.

Glen, meanwhile, after his sharp tussle with suffering, found himself rather comfortable, and by the second afternoon lay quiet, smiling, wondering, accepting ministrations without opening his eyes, halting on the threshold of thought without trying to cross it, feeling that his ease of mind and body was not on his own conscience, but on everybody's conscience. Gradually he decided that the deft, capable hand that made all things so easy, so efficacious, must be the hand of Constance Bertini. Impossible that any one else could do everything so perfectly. A vague sentiment of beatitude hovered over him like a perfume. He seemed to inhale it, live on it, live by it. It had something to do with the novel ease with which he drew breath, with the

refreshment he found in sinking into sleep. Who else could it be but Constance ?

"One gets spoiled here ; but God owed me this ; in my youth I suffered too much," Winckelmann wrote when he had arrived at his heart's desire. So felt Glen also, as if what he craved and needed were being made up to him. .

It was on the fourth day that he heard a voice say, —

"Poor Glen !"

"But he is vastly better," John corrected quickly.

"Oh yes, better. He will soon be well. What I was thinking of is that he needs such constant care. I feel as if I should like to watch over him always."

"You are so good," John murmured.

"However, it is the last thing he would want."

"No, indeed. He was always used to a woman's ministrations until my mother's death."

"Why does n't he marry ?"

"Why do not all men marry ?" John inquired.

"You know very well, I presume, why you yourself do not marry."

"I!" John exclaimed. "Pray tell me if you know the reason. It has always puzzled me."

"I used to give you credit for sincerity."

John said hesitatingly that he was sorry to have forfeited the other's good opinion.

"Don't pay me false and meaningless compliments."

"Do I, now ?"

"You pretend to care about my good opinion."

"I do very much."

"Yet your whole mode of action contradicts your words. You have paid me the compliment of running away from me ever since I was twenty years old."

John exclaimed, with startled apprehension, "What was that sound?" He darted towards the bed, and gazed into the pale, placid face of the sick man.

"He is awake," the nurse said. "I wished him to wake up. It is time for his beef tea."

What Haliburton had heard had been an irresistible chuckle of amusement. Curiosity had finally overmastered Glen's attitude of serene receptivity, and he had opened his eyes. He had been so certain that Constance Bertini was his nurse; in the most trifling ministration to his comfort there had been a suavity, a charm; in each sip of broth or milk there had been a singular potency. Only Constance could do things in that divine way. There had been a quiet bliss in lying there, irresponsible, blind, deaf, accepting renovation from her goodness and bounty. However, the words and voice of the unknown had been far from suggesting Constance. His illusions were now dispelled. It was not Constance, it was not even the zealous Kitty who was adjusting his pillows and offering nourishment. It was just Sue Darrow. Nevertheless, the sight of John taken to task by Miss Darrow for

his long series of omissions towards her and the rest of the sex he pretended to honor was a wonderful fillip. Glen found life worth living on the instant.

He did not, however, rub the bloom off his convalescence by confessing to be restored on the instant. He had a horror of sensation, of being obliged to converse, of having to be grateful and appreciative. Cousin Sue as a nurse was adorable. He rested in her care as in his mother's arms, but the moment he was ready to open his eyes and see and his ears and hear, he knew with a shiver of dread she would be in earnest about something. She would n't let him drift; she could n't, to save her life, let anybody drift. He could hear her in the far reaches of the house instructing Dilsey and the cook, explaining the whys and wherefores, — why coffee and tea should not be boiled; the effect of tannin on the system; the absolute necessity of freeing the broth from fat; the dangers attending fresh bread. John had given up all his freedom, — as it were, made it up into a parcel and handed it over to Miss Darrow. She said she thought coffee disagreed with him. He renounced coffee. She did not approve of tobacco. He smoked no more. He obediently ate, drank, sat, walked, slept, and waked exactly as she directed.

One evening after Miss Darrow had gone to her own house to sleep, Glen felt like talking.

"Oh, John," he said, "Sue has been so good to me."

Haliburton nodded.

"I was never taken such good care of in all my life," Glen pursued.

"I know," Haliburton returned rather ruefully.

"She is the most perfect nurse, John," Glen went on.

"She has had the training," Haliburton answered dryly. "I suppose it's simply a matter of scientific training."

"Possibly. One has the notion that all nice women are good nurses, but I really suppose that Conny would be a bungler compared to Sue."

Haliburton almost snorted in his indignation.

"But you don't know the difference, John," Glen insisted. "Sue has the most delicious touch, — not only has a touch that goes right to the spot and seems to cure, but also takes away your trouble of mind and soul."

"I can see that she understands it all." John's concession was of the driest description.

"I wish you would pretend to have a headache, John," Glen said, "just to find out what good care she will take of you."

"No, thanks."

"I hope," Glen murmured, his eyelids just parted so that he could get a glimpse of John's face, — "I can't help thinking that I do hope you will marry Sue."

"Good God!" ejaculated Haliburton, not impiously, but with all the solemnity of an invocation.

"She would make you the most perfect wife."

"Look here, Glen, I don't wish to go against your wishes in any way to retard your recovery, but you may as well understand once for all that I shall never marry Miss Darrow."

"But after — after all this — after — I mean I don't exactly see how you can help it now."

"Not help it now? What do you mean?"

"Here she has been coming day after day."

"Not to see me. Why don't you marry her yourself out of gratitude and appreciation?"

"Oh, she cares nothing for me. It is you she values, John. She was telling me to-day that she considered you for a *man* almost perfect."

"Nonsense, — absurd!"

"You'll have to come to it, John. Everybody picked her out for you years ago, you know. These things settle themselves for us without our own will. I really do consider that my illness was providential in bringing you together. Just accept the fact as inevitable, and when you have bolted it you will confess that it did you good. This house needs a mistress."

Haliburton abstained from speech, but in the power of expressing dissent while he remained silent no man could at this moment have excelled him.

"If you would like me to break the ice between you," Glen was about to suggest, when he saw a gleam of something in John's eye answering the twinkle in his own.

"If you dare!" said Haliburton.

Glen, having lain quiescent for a few days, was suddenly well. Miss Darrow came in one morning and found him up and dressed.

"I suppose this means that I am dismissed," she observed, with a sigh.

"You have been awfully good to me, dear cousin Sue."

"I have enjoyed coming over. I like something to do. There is such a stimulus in the thought that one has some real grip of life and effort."

"I don't know what I should have done without you."

"Oh, John would have got a hospital nurse," said Miss Darrow. "That is the trouble with being an amateur,—I have robbed some professional of three dollars a day."

"You would n't take it?"

"If you and John are pleased that is all I ask for."

"I'm always an ungrateful wretch, but John is grateful from the bottom of his heart. You know his way; he may not say as much as others, but he feels it, Sue."

"I like John so much," Miss Darrow rejoined, with fine candor. "I would do almost anything for him. I always realize that he is a shy man. He does not appreciate himself; he seems to have no idea what a fine, presentable, really clever and attractive man he is."

"I think he requires some woman to bring him out."

"Yes, that is it. He needs sympathy, encouragement. I know of no one who better deserves it. When one considers the sort of men who make more show in society" —

"Me, for example?"

"I was n't alluding to you, Glen. I was thinking how well he looks sitting at the head of his own table."

"The fact about it is, I have always stood in the way of John's marrying. I dare say were I to go about my business, as a man should, he would find somebody willing to take him."

"You need be no hindrance to his marrying."

"I'm always around under foot. She might not like me."

"I'll answer for it, she would. Everybody likes you, Glen, whether or not they approve of you. But, speaking of John, it really goes to my heart that so little should be done for his comfort." Miss Darrow's voice dropped to a whisper. "Now those servants! I can't begin to tell you what an undertaking it has been to get well-made, nourishing dishes for you. I have gone into the kitchen day by day and given an object-lesson in cooking, as it were, but it was clear that both Dilsey and his wife considered that I was exceeding my privileges. I tried to explain the processes of digestion. The soup had been greasy, the fillet of beef had twice been over-larded. I did actually hope they had comprehended, but they listened incredulous. 'Gentle-folks' stomachs seems to be very queer,' the cook

remarked with an offended air, as if I had been talking about something improper. I confess I hate to think of John's being at the mercy of that woman with her half-skimmed soup."

It was a very warm day, and Miss Darrow, still breathing solicitudes for Haliburton, took Glen into the garden, and established him in the summer-house, sending Dilsey forward and back with cushions, rugs, and cups of broth.

"I do sometimes get a little chance to be really useful," Miss Darrow then said complacently, when Glen lay back declaring that he was sublimely comfortable, "even if I do not accept a mission and go out on a crusade. You say I have done you good, Glen, but you and John have also done me good. There is not room in my own life for my full energies to take shape and develop. But, just because I love poppa and momma and the girls, I stay at home, a striking example of the powerlessness of a woman to escape from her grooves without sufficient motive. The craving of the modern man seems to be to get rid of the curse of labor. The modern woman cries for more and more to do, — a freer outlet for her energies. I can only believe that the logical outcome of the present transition lies in the marriage of the contraries. Man is to lay down the initiative, woman is to assume the initiative. It will be just a little curious if, a hundred years from now" —

Miss Darrow paused, — not that her speculations were exhausted, for such speculations are practi-

cally inexhaustible. But it was clear that Glen, perhaps overbraced by such strong tonics, had fallen asleep, and to go on discoursing to a convalescent whom she had wooed to slumber would have contradicted her hygienic methods and theories. She disposed of her unused cushions in a way to promote his comfort if he moved. She fenced off a possible draught with the screen. She drew the little table, with its wine jelly and biscuits, nearer to his hand, then, with an appreciative glance at his fine Vandyck contours and saying to herself, "Glen is just too absurdly good-looking," she walked through the garden, with its beds of mignonette, heliotropes, roses, and carnations, deciding that there were too many fragrant flowers to be wholesome, turned into the house, gave a few final capable directions, and went on her useful way.

Whether or no Glen had really fallen asleep while she talked, no sooner had she left him than he was wide awake. The interval of repose when he had shrunk from the idea of effort, struggle, even thought, was over. Life was beginning again for him. He lay looking into the garden flooded with light, where all the flowers were wide open, drinking in the sunshine, harboring bees that crept in and out rustling and droning; offering their sweets as well to the humming-birds that poised themselves and seemed to vibrate before the open chalices. He listened to the drip of the little fountain. He reached out his hand for the hour-glass and turned it. He wanted the full realization of this sweet,

idle hour. Again and again he turned and gazed at the wall, above which a spray of the pink flowers of the oleander was tossed up against the blue of the sky.

He felt exquisitely happy. After all, let a man be what sort of failure he may, still these shows of things penetrating his imagination make him feel that he is fed even when he has neither meat nor wine nor bread. His eyes rested on the cool color of the gray stone gables; the tops of the trees swaying against the azure tranquilized him. What was the wonder of an arabesque of flowers and foliage, the arch of a turret, the sudden trick of light that transfigured the leaves of a white birch as they turned in the breeze? Once upon a time Glen would have felt that it was the duty of an artist to fix these fleeting effects in words; he had loved to seize upon such impressions, refining upon them endlessly, touching and retouching, to be used at need as a bit of background or vivid color. His ideal had been not only to enjoy but to translate every kindling experience into something that could move others. But all that world of aspiration, of effort, seemed afar off. He had long since given it up as useless. The divine spark allotted to Glen had burned only himself.

A flock of pigeons flew across the open space of sky, their snow-white throats and wings glistening in the sunlight. It was so beautiful that something clutched at his heart. He closed his eyes.

What he was thinking of was Teddy Darrow's

talk. Oh, if he, Glen, could but begin over again like Teddy, with a healthy mind in a sound body ; choose his career ; arrange the conditions which should make it prosperous ; spend his powers in success ; be a part of the great social movement, instead of suffering this freezing isolation — this dismal sense of failure !

It was singular how the thought of Teddy stung him. The young fellow's effrontery in being in love with Kitty, and, with magnificent leisure of procedure, planning to marry her when the right time came, made him conscious of an inarticulate smouldering resentment. He could not define whether it was a dog-in-the-manger feeling against Teddy, or against all the world of strong, lucky people.

His eyes still fast shut, he became conscious that somebody was approaching him. It was perhaps Miss Darrow returning ; or Dilsey, with a cup of bouillon, of which Glen's very soul was sick. He did not take the trouble to open his eyes. He perceived that the presence lingered. He simulated deep slumber. The intruder drew closer. He could hear its quick breathing. Soft as thistle-down, a touch alighted on his hair ; something fragrant and warm grazed his ear. Surely that was not Sue Darrow kissing him ! He lay still for an apparently endless moment, then coughed, sighed, changed his position and opened his eyes upon the lovely, flushed face of the girl who was kneeling beside him.

" Why, Kitty ! " he murmured.

"I am afraid I waked you up," she said remorsefully.

"Was I asleep?"

"Oh yes, I am sure you were sleeping soundly. You were not merely pretending to be asleep, cousin Glen?" This with an anxious note in her voice.

"Why should I pretend to be asleep? Here I have been stretched out waiting for visitors to come and congratulate me upon my recovery. Not even a cat has been near me."

"What a shame! Here I am. I have been over two or three times a day to inquire."

"Actually?"

"Did they not tell you? Mamma came also."

"She is very kind. You are very kind. Everybody has been so kind that I should be sick to death of kindness if I had a grain of spirit. But I have not."

"Are you glad to see me?"

"I prefer you to a cat, certainly. Don't move. Stay just where you are, Kitty. I like to look at you. That wide-brimmed hat makes a good background for your face."

"I have brought you some cherries."

She lifted the leaves from the basket on her arm and showed him the luscious fruit.

"Presently," he returned.

He hated to have her change her position. He seemed suddenly to have discovered that she was marvelously pretty. Her skin, although dark, was soft, and smooth as ivory; her lips were blooming,

her teeth small, even, white. And, good heavens ! he actually believed that she had kissed him of her own free will. At this conviction there now came a quick leap of his blood which the caress itself had not stirred. He had half a mind to kiss her back. Was it a childish freak or some experimental coquettish jugglery ?

"You are really better, cousin Glen ?" she said tremulously.

"Really better. Did you actually pity a poor, sick fellow ?"

"Pity ! It was dreadful to me." She looked at him with eyes running over with tears ; her lips quivered. "The very stones seemed to cry out that you were suffering. If I could have come and nursed you instead of cousin Sue ! But mamma said that she and I would only be in the way."

"Did Conny care that I was ill ?"

"Mamma was very sorry. Still, she was not as much alarmed as I was. She said you had probably taken cold ; that very likely after all you did not suffer ; that these attacks belonged to your temperament."

"Hang my temperament ! hang my sufferings !" said Glen. "Why do you come and say these things to me ? Half an hour ago I was perfectly happy. I cared nothing for anything or anybody."

"Shall I go away ?"

"No ; stay."

"If you care for nothing and nobody, you will not mind me."

"No." They smiled at each other. "Let me see," he said: "how old are you, Kitty?"

"I was eighteen the 24th of May."

"So old? Why, some of these days you will be grown up."

"I am taller than mamma now."

"That is not being grown up. The grapes fill out by July or August, but it is long after that they are sweet."

Kitty gave a little shrug. "I would rather be a sour grape than a sweet ripe one, which somebody picks and eats, and soon makes an end of."

"Exactly. A sour grape is safe. It may hang as long and as high as it chooses. Nobody wants it. How about those cherries? I like ripe cherries."

She piled the richest of the fruit on an empty plate which lay on the little table, and set them within his reach. Kitty's vanity, however, was not entirely satisfied by the characterization of herself as a sour, green grape.

"Before we came away from Florence," she now remarked in a clear, deliberate voice, "some months before we came away, Lucia — Lucia was our cook — said to mamma that the signorina was quite grown up now; soon there would be a husband coming for her."

"Who might the signorina be?"

"I am the signorina."

"Good gracious! You the signorina! What did the signora marchesa say to that?"

"That husbands are like a good year for the

figs and olives, — it comes or it does not come. One need never think twice about it.”

Glen burst into a fit of laughter. “Good for Conny! I should like to box Lucia’s ears. A child like you ought never to have heard the word husband.”

“My friend Bianca Floriani was married last Easter to a Sicilian count.”

“So you think it would be a fine thing to be married to a Sicilian count?”

“Oh, not in the least. I saw his picture. He was excessively ugly, with a large nose and no chin.”

Glen began to show that he was bored. A frown appeared between his brows.

“Don’t talk about such subjects,” he said witheringly. “For a few minutes you charmed me.”

She looked at him with an air of naïve delight. “I really charmed you?”

“I am sick of marrying and giving in marriage,” Glen said petulantly. “They say there is nothing of the sort in heaven, and I am homesick for such a resting-place.”

“I thought what made heaven was loving and being loved again.”

“There is no such thing in the universe. At any rate, nobody ever loved me back again. If I were to begin my life anew, I would love no one.

‘To lose good nights that might be better spent,
To waste long days in pensive discontent,
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed on hope, and pine with fear and sorrow’ —

I have had enough of it all. Kitty, tell me you too will forswear it all."

"Forswear loving people!" Kitty repeated, aghast. "I could not help it. It seems to me there is nothing else worth doing in the world."

"There is everything else to do. Love, sentiment, passion, — they are simply the substitutes for action, energy, healthy, unspoiled feeling. I wash my hands of it all henceforth. I am going to excavate a buried city, dig up a Greek warrior or a marble Venus, study art in Japan, or become an Armenian and throw off the Turkish yoke. At any rate, I will not speak to one of your sweet, tantalizing sex until I am sixty years old."

"Not to mamma?"

"She would like nothing better."

"Not to me?"

"Particularly not to you."

"Why not?"

"Because you are young; because you have a destiny to accomplish; because you can't be what I dream you to be."

"What do you dream me to be, cousin Glen?"

"It's no use telling you."

"I would do anything to be what you dream me to be."

"No use, — you can't. Just now, for example, I liked you, — I quite liked you. You were pretty to look at, rather charming to listen to. Then all at once, like the green fruit you are, you put my teeth on edge."

"Oh, cousin Glen! Tell me how."

"I was idealizing a sweet little girl with the bloom on her ideas, when suddenly she assumed the tone of a woman."

"The tone of a woman?"

"Talked about a husband. I tell you, Kitty, it bored me inexpressibly."

Kitty did not try to parry his derisive glance. She could not meet it. Her eyelids shut down. She flushed crimson, sprang up, darted across the garden, and flung herself at full length on the turf, pulling up handfuls of grass like an angry child.

Glen's eyes followed her. He, too, rose, rolled a cigarette, lighted it, walked towards the fountain, and sat down on the edge of the basin. He was amused, yet a little disturbed at the effect of his petulant words. The thought of her caress still gave him a warm, heady feeling. For a moment his instinct had sounded her through, and he had said to himself, "She is downright fond of me. I could cut Teddy Darrow out if I were to raise my finger." His whole being had been vitalized by a grateful impulse, and he had turned rough and churlish to find that the commonplace idea of a husband was running in her head. He could only think of Teddy.

"Kitty!" he called, "Kitty!"

There was no answer. Again, in a wheedling tone, —

"Kitty!" After a pause, "This sort of agitation is not good for a sick man."

She rose to her feet, stood and met his glance, her splendid eyes and her haughty brows fixed upon him with a new expression.

"What is it?" she asked in a dull, suffering voice.

"Come back, come back, and be a delightful little cousin."

"You said I bored you."

"I was generalizing broadly. What I meant was, that when a girl begins to talk about falling in love with somebody besides himself it bores a man inexpressibly."

Kitty listened critically to this explanation, with her head a little on one side as if testing its plausibility.

"You see, *Caterina mia*," Glen pursued blandly, "every man is at heart a Turk. He would prefer to put every woman he admires under a veil and behind a grating."

She listened, evidently flattered.

"And only see her himself?" she inquired.

"He could use his discretion. He would say to her, 'Be happy, tend thy flowers, be tended by my blessing.' Never let your fancy dwell upon any other man, except, of course" —

She was following his words so eagerly, with such evident belief in his seriousness, that he broke off and laughed.

"It is all of no use, however," he now observed in a different tone. "Girls like you have been shut up in tall towers, hidden in caverns, offered to

monsters, but the irrepressible lover has always appeared at the wrong moment, — scaled fortresses, penetrated bolts and bars, opened castle-keeps, slain devouring dragons.”

She had been walking slowly towards him, along the paths between the beds of mignonette and pinks, as he spoke. Her lowered eyelids let the glimmer of a smile shine through; her flexible scarlet lips showed a glimpse of her white, even teeth. She now seated herself on the other side of the marble basin from Glen.

“So you would like to marry a Sicilian count, all nose and no chin?” he said roguishly.

“Never!” she returned, with intense disdain.

“How do you happen to know your own mind so well? Has the irrepressible lover arrived?” he inquired blandly.

She nodded, then, as if dreading misconception, added, —

“That is, I — I” —

“You have him in your mind’s eye, I suppose. Capital place for a lover. Keep him there by all means. He is sure not to be half good enough for you.”

“All I ask is that he might consider me good enough to tread on,” she murmured in a trembling voice; her face was suffused with color, her eyes brimming with tears. “He does tread on me; he does not care about me; he despises me.”

Glen’s face showed a quickening of apprehension.

"Good gracious, what are you talking about?" he asked.

"You asked me," she replied deprecatingly.

"You are as good as a novel," Glen said indifferently. "I wondered how I was to get through the morning." He looked at his watch. "Here we are, — it's one o'clock."

"Oh," cried Kitty, springing up, "I forgot, — I quite forgot."

"Forgot what?"

"Mamma sent me over to ask you to come to luncheon. The pony-carriage was to follow at one o'clock. Mr. Haliburton stopped on his way to the train, and said that he really thought you were well enough to have a little society."

"I'm perfectly well; you have cured me, Kitty."

"And you will come?"

"I'm charmed to come."

When she was driving him over to Waldstein Glen said mischievously, —

"By the way, Kitty, you did n't tell me what sort of a fellow he was."

"Rather nice," she returned drolly.

"Does he reciprocate your affection?"

"Not one bit."

"That is abominable."

"No, it is not. If he liked me as well as I like him, I should simply die. I could n't live through it. The very thought of it makes me cold."

She alternately flushed and paled.

"Don't care for anybody like that!" he ex-

claimed. "Nobody is worth it. It means suffering days and nights, — agonies of loneliness, of jealousy."

"I know it."

"It draws away good, nourishing blood that sustains life, and puts poison in its place."

"I know it."

He was startled by the melancholy fire of her eyes.

"And besides," he said, "the good-for-nothing, ungrateful wretch will presently be so conceited he will believe he was born so and can't help it."

CHAPTER X.

PLACE AUX DAMES.

ARRIVED at Waldstein, Glen was in quite another atmosphere. He was not the only visitor. Mrs. Darrow and Agatha had dropped in, and had been asked to stay to luncheon. Mrs. Darrow was glad to see Glen, regarding him as the outward and visible sign of her daughter's achievement. Sue had snatched him, if not from the grave, from a dangerous condition. What was more, Sue had put John Haliburton's household to rights. Anything so old-fashioned, so wrong-headed as the ways of that household, had not before met the up-to-date observation of the Darrows. The ignorance, the prejudice, the lack of accurate, scientific knowledge on the part of Dilsey and the cook, had furnished a fund of anecdote. Glen wished with all his heart he had stayed in the dear, old-fashioned garden talking to Kitty. Mrs. Darrow made his cup run over. He could amuse himself a good deal with Gatty in the absence of the rest of the family, but at this moment he frankly hated them all.

Constance was Constance, however. She gave him a comfortable armchair by her side. She had

prepared two or three delightful dishes for him, — just the dishes he craved, — and now set Kitty to spreading brown bread with butter fresh from the churn. Kitty, putting all her heart and soul into the task, looked about fourteen years old, and Glen's belief in her ardent preference for himself or anything save the bread and butter waned.

"Sue says," Mrs. Darrow proceeded, "that in John Haliburton we recognize the defect of his qualities. He has walked all his life in the narrow lighted circle which his mother appointed for her and for himself, and he does not even venture to believe in the possibility of a world outside. Dilsey walked behind, drinking in every word they uttered. Anything Mrs. Haliburton ever said or did still remains the law of the household."

"That is what I like," said Richard Amory.

"But, dear cousin Richard, in the matter of beef tea, for example" —

In the matter of beef tea, in particular, Richard Amory fully believed Lucy Haliburton's way was certain to have been the right way. Why not, when Lucy Haliburton must have learned it from Sarah Ambury? It was an admitted fact for miles around that Sarah Ambury had always done everything better than her neighbors.

"Very likely," Mrs. Darrow conceded. "Because in those old days, when everybody was more or less ignorant, superior natural faculty, supplemented by tradition, gave certain women in each community a wonderful effectiveness which was

widely recognized. They did the best they could, — so much better than their neighbors that it was then believed they did the best that could be done. I do not wish to underrate the superior women of a past generation. They did their best, but our own best is so far beyond their highest possible, that there can be no comparison."

"Oh, the comfort of knowing exactly how to do everything in the very best way," said Gatty.

Glen, who had kept his eyes fixed on a wonderful arrangement of the flowers of the catalpa in the centre of the table, glanced at Agatha as if he had almost made up his mind to speak, but he changed his intention and kept silent.

"Every Friday morning at a quarter past nine," said Mrs. Darrow, "I sit down at my desk and compose my bills of fare for the coming week. Sunday's dinner makes two breakfasts and one luncheon. The evolution of cold turkey into croquettes and patties may be as scientifically interesting as the differentiations in chrysanthemums and geraniums under treatment."

"What excessive premeditation," said Constance. "'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' is the motto of bad housekeepers like me."

"I account for every egg," Mrs. Darrow proceeded triumphantly. "Not only for every egg, but for each half of an egg, — for the white that makes a *méringue* has given its yolk to one of the *entrées*."

"If," Kitty, as usual athirst for information, now suggested, "Gatty were to ask for an egg beaten up in sherry between meals, would it upset all the whole week's calculations?"

"Oh, I allow a margin," Mrs. Darrow cheerfully rejoined. "Even in the most careful house-keeping there are exigencies and emergencies."

"Accidents happen in the best educated families," Glen, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, murmured under his breath, "for they have happened in mine."

Mrs. Darrow, in the joy of her subject, went on describing her management of her soup-kettle.

"A regular witch's caldron," mused Glen. "I shall never dare eat soup in your house again."

The scoffing critic was not listened to. Mrs. Darrow had more in her mind than merely adorning the luncheon with casual conversation. She was enlightening Constance, who, poor thing, had been out of the world's grand sweep of movement so long, she needed to be given the requisite push. The Darrows were all exercised on the subject of Kitty, only half-educated, left to run wild, simply to do what she chose to do, instead of taking hold of life with a grip, and getting out of it what she ought to have.

"Of course," Mrs. Darrow went on, fluent, unhesitating, "there are people who refuse to see in the remarkable process of evolution going on before their eyes anything natural, regular, inevitable. They may prefer to believe that the phenomenon

presented in modern society of woman's taking a foremost place, infusing new spirit into old ideas of reform, and initiating new ones, is merely accidental, — the result of some hand-to-mouth exigency met by spasmodic effort. But I am not one of those who are blind. I have not permitted my daughters to grow up blindly. They have to meet the emergency, and I have tried to prepare them to grapple with its problems and solve them."

"You take my breath away!" Constance exclaimed. "Is there a crisis?"

"Thee knows, Constance, there is always a crisis in the newspapers," said Richard Amory.

"It is of your daughter I am thinking. The conditions for unlimited expansion of her duties, rights, privileges, exist already. Do not retard her progress."

"Give her a soup-kettle," said Glen imploringly.

Constance, as if to reassure herself, reached out her hand to Kitty. They both smiled, although the young girl looked slightly puzzled.

"What are you going to do with her?" Mrs. Darrow demanded, pressing the matter home like the voice of conscience.

"Conny's superiority to the rest of mankind consists in her not doing," said Glen.

"I am doing all I know how to do with her," answered Constance. "She is my child, — I am her mother. We have unlimited comfort in each other."

"I denied myself all that," said Mrs. Darrow. "I said to each of my three girls: 'You have your own life to live. I want you to study your own needs. Somehow you have to breathe, eat, digest, enjoy, and suffer for yourself. I am here simply to help your development.'"

"I should hate to have Kitty sit down and study herself. I understand her,—that is quite enough."

"You cannot understand her."

"I understand her sufficiently to keep my finger on the pulse of the machine. I want her to be loving, unselfish, helpful."

"Ah, that is it,—a good woman's unselfishness fosters the selfishness of the men and women she lives with."

"Thee would have her foster her own selfishness?" suggested Richard Amory.

"I mean that she is herself and nobody else. I consider that she should not be allowed to sink into a downy sleep,—to accept a passive content. You may say she is still a child, but presently she will be grown up. The question is whether you are fitting her to choose her career in life by cultivating any particular talent."

"I do not think Kitty has any particular talent," Constance replied.

"Oh dear, what a decision! Like a decree of fate."

"She is like me," said Constance. "I have no particular talent."

"Now, dear cousin Conny," Agatha exclaimed, "I consider you quite the cleverest woman I know!"

"That is because I do not write books, or make speeches, or put myself into any competition with clever women. If I did, you would soon have me at a disadvantage."

"Every well-reared girl nowadays ought to be able to support herself if necessary," Mrs. Darrow said, looking at Kitty, who had been following the discussion with an intent, rather puzzled look, as if trying to separate the wheat from the chaff; but who now, feeling herself called upon to answer, stammered out quite aghast, —

"I — I — I — do not think I should know how to support myself."

"You know Italian, of course, — French and English?"

"She draws beautifully," said Gatty.

"I can make lace," Kitty murmured deprecatingly.

"And embroider; oh, she is quite wonderful with the needle."

"Why, you have no end of talents, Kitty," Glen said, sitting back in his chair and gazing at her.

"Take my napkin."

"Heaven help her if she ever has to earn her living by any one of them," observed Constance. "I hear people talk of the astonishing abilities of this woman or that. Mrs. Edward Darrow was saying yesterday, 'So much good work; there are really

no amateurs nowadays.' I refrained only by an effort from saying that there were nothing but amateurs."

"Ah, cousin Conny, that is cruel," said Gatty. "Mamma talks about our having chosen our careers, — about the importance of girls being able to make their own living. If she were consistent she would push her young birds out of the nest and let them try their wings."

"Sue could make a good income as a nurse."

"Whether Millicent and I could would be the question."

"I do not wish to earn my own living," said Kitty, still perplexed.

"Exactly. Why should you? Why should we while poppa makes nobody knows how many thousands a year for us?"

"The reason girls who feel the sacredness and privilege of their individual rights as women desire to support themselves," said Mrs. Darrow, "is not to be independent of their fathers, but to have a career if only in order not to have to look out for a husband to support them."

"It is because the world is so awfully dull for us women," said Gatty. "We are so tired of having to be invited to go out to dinner, to dance, to marry. It is so tedious. A girl wants the chance of a quiet, simple life all of a piece, — not to be at the mercy of mere chance, — to have her regular work to do; not to be torn this way and that by fluctuating hopes, feelings, aspirations."

"You have reached that vantage-point?" Glen inquired politely.

"Not quite yet," said Gatty. "As soon as people buy my pictures I shall begin."

"No husband? Not a single husband?"

"Not until I am thirty-five, at least. Surely you do not suppose I would give up all my youth and strength and ambition to married life! After one has accomplished something" —

"Or requires some compensation for having accomplished nothing. That is the way I myself feel."

"The ideal marriage does exist," Mrs. Darrow conceded. "Logically it belongs to a successful career. Yet I persist in telling my daughters that there are duties which come first."

"I agree with you there," said Constance. "A girl must learn in her own home how to give and receive happiness, how to promote comfort, cheer, the charm of life."

"In a word, foster the selfishness of her father, mother, brothers, and sisters. I am thinking of the city, the state, the country. Men have settled down into a state of mind which means nothing but social deterioration and disintegration. Honesty is a tradition to smile at. Faithful performance of duty, disinterestedness, have flatly vanished out of the existing scheme of things. Men's hearts, intellects, consciences, are in the clutch of a determination to be rich at any cost. Every service has its price. Every enterprise is a job."

"When I think of what men are," cried Gatty, her eyes lighted, her cheeks aflame, "I feel as if I could not marry even by the time I am thirty-five."

"Do not, — do not be so cruel," Glen murmured.

"If a man is successful," said Gatty, "it is just as momma says; he is honeycombed with corruption. If he is a failure it is not from his having loftier ideas, but because he accepts the state of things passively."

"Exactly. That hits me. Oh, for one hour to be a successful rogue honeycombed with corruption!" said Glen.

"Gatty," suggested Constance, "why not marry one of these failures and bring him up to your level?"

"I may be ready to do so at thirty-five. Even then, suppose I lived to be seventy, there would be thirty-five years of seeing him at breakfast and dinner. Oh, how tired I should be of the creature!"

"Thee feels quite sure he would like it?" inquired Richard Amory.

"I dare say he would be as much bored with smiling at me and calling me 'my wife' as I should be with smiling at him and saying 'my husband.' I think I will put it off until I am fifty."

"But, Gatty!" Kitty cried, as if in anguish.

"Well, Kitty?"

"Suppose, just only suppose, you loved him!"

"I could n't suppose it," returned Gatty. "That is not the sort of woman I am."

"My dear Kitty," said Glen, "you will have to discard the idea of a husband as a superfluous luxury; you will become revolutionary about your right to a personal career. You will take to smoking cigarettes" —

"Mamma would not allow me to smoke cigarettes."

"I tell you, you will find out your rights, and what your mamma says will refer to some previous state of existence, not to your newly arrived stage of enlightenment. You will understand for yourself that vegetation at home is for cabbages, that woman requires novelty, entertainment, fullness of experience. I have just one atom of curiosity which almost piques me into enduring the new state of society for a few hundred years, and that is to see what woman will have become by the year 2500; whether, with all her advanced and advancing ideas, she will by that date have succeeded in accomplishing anything original. She imitates man with amazing cleverness; all that man has done she does, or attempts to do, — commits murders and suicides, writes books, rides wheels, keeps shop, dances on the tight-rope, performs surgical operations, preaches and lectures. But so far she has done only one thing man cannot do."

"What is that?" inquired Kitty, with animation, but Constance had made the move.

Richard Amory put his hands one on each of Glen's shoulders, pushed him into the book-room, closed the door and locked it.

"I am glad thee pitched into them," he said.
"I was ready to burst."

"Why did thee not speak?" inquired Glen.

"Because I had nothing to say, save 'Woman, hold thy peace.'"

"I felt, I still feel, like the vanishing point of a far perspective," said Glen. "Give me a pipe."

Each chose an easy-chair, sat down, sank back into the cushions, and put his feet up on the sofa.

"Is this your strongest tobacco?" Glen murmured. "I want something that will take the taste of it out of my mouth."

"Try that madeira. I have only a little of it left, but I give it to thee to-day. Thee needs it. I need it."

There came a pause. Then Richard Amory broke silence : —

"I do admire these women who decide that for six thousand years the world has been going on from bad to worse, and that they are now going to set it all right."

"The method of making over mankind they do not stop to consider. They enjoy their triumph in the idea."

"A woman with an idea is like a dog with a bone in his mouth."

"I would be willing to wager that Conny has more housekeeping in her little finger than Alice Darrow has in her whole body."

"I have wondered sometimes that Ambury stuck

so hard at his work. He goes to town at 7.30 and returns at 6.30."

"I should live in my office if I were he."

"Did thee not think she actually believed she had arrived at the summit of ideas?"

"At the very summit, and as if we were the pebbles under her feet."

"The cleverest woman of this century was the mere puppet of a man."

"Plenty of women have their share of genius, but I don't pretend to be great because Shakespeare and Dante have existed."

"I ask thee if at this moment there is on earth any woman who excels man in any occupation in which she attempts to rival men?"

"There are some first-class actresses and singers."

"No female novelist can compare with Sienkiewicz."

"Far from it."

"Is there a great woman painter?" *Rosa Bonheur*

"Not one."

"Sculptor?"

"Not one."

A tap at the door interrupted the colloquy.

"Who is there?"

"It is I, uncle Richard."

A hand tried the door.

"The door is locked, uncle Richard."

"Of course it is locked."

"Mamma says we are waiting coffee on the terrace."

"Will thee tell thy mamma we are very particularly engaged."

The two men exchanged looks of satisfaction. They were about to resume their classification of the sex when a voice came from the window, —

"Why will you not come and join us?"

"We are gnashing our teeth," said Richard.

"You have reduced us to protoplasm. We have got to begin and develop over again," Glen added.

"We did not intend to be so hard on you as all that," called out Gatty.

"Oh, come," cried Kitty. "It is so dull without you. Do come."

"Thee does not realize that there can be no place for us in thy world. We give it up to the women."

"We shall start for Japan. You can make things over without loss of time, — *recommencer la société humaine.*"

"We did our best, but we confess that we have made a failure of it. Accordingly we withdraw from the contest. Thee can go out to the Zoo and choose some other domestic animal to take the place of man."

"I did not intend," said Mrs. Darrow, "to hurt anybody's feelings."

"Oh, we're callous."

"Come out, and let us reason together."

"No woman can reason."

"Thy facts may be all right, — it is thy conclusions that are all wrong."

"Besides, it's no use arguing with a woman. When I argue with a man and he doesn't admit the truth of what I tell him, I just say, 'You are a notorious ass.' Chivalry forbids saying it to a woman."

"Oh, chivalry was exploded long ago. Come out, — the afternoon is so beautiful."

"If we come out, thee would go about boasting of it."

"Besides we are smoking pipes, drinking madeira, not to say brandy, whiskey, rum, gin, and beer. We have ~~got~~ our feet up on the sofa. Somehow, we must assert our rights."

"We give in, — we give in," said Constance. "With all your faults we love you still. Come, the coffee is getting cold."

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE GARDEN BY MOONLIGHT.

THERE was a capacity for mischief in Glendenning Rennie which had had its snares and temptations for him when he was younger, and which he had never put behind him as a dangerous thing, but kept, as it were, to give a fillip to life. After an illness in which he had measured time rather heavily, he had before now yielded to an instinct to take his fling, assert his right to his innings, against fate and circumstance, even his limitations of health and strength. While Agatha Darrow had talked that day at luncheon about marriage, it had seemed to Glen that she not only flung down a challenge, but had flung it down to him. In fact, Glen and Agatha had before now had little passages of intimacy, when he directed her artistic attempts, talked to her about art, poetry, and, perhaps, men and women. Her high imaginations, her ideals, her somewhat chaotic theories of life, diverted him, and he liked to bring out the contradictions in her. To-night Mrs. Darrow had asked Glen and Haliburton to dinner, and as Glen dragged John reluctant and unwilling, he announced his intention of flirting a little with Agatha.

"Just as a pioneer, you know, John, — to point out the way. You can look at me and take a hint how to make love to Sue."

"Glen, if you don't cease making those absurd, abominable allusions, I will turn about and go back. I did not want to come; I hated to come. I can't understand how you had the presumption to accept for me."

"You ought to be glad to come if only out of common decent gratitude to Sue for nursing me," said Glen, making just the high humane plea which would grasp Haliburton's conscience.

In the whole wide world there was no more modest man than John Haliburton. The dimmest, vaguest recesses of his mind could not have harbored the fancy that any woman could feel a preference for him. Yet his instinct towards the eldest Miss Darrow was one of lively dread. Ever since he had become her father's partner the possibility of a different, but still a family, partnership seemed to be in everybody's mind. Even Mrs. Haliburton had once told her son that perhaps Sue was just the wife he needed. This speech had not merely hurt him, as only the lack of comprehension in those who ought to understand us best can hurt, but it had helped to give him a nightmare sensation that, through some vacuity of purpose, some paralysis of will, he might give up the struggle and ultimately find himself at the altar pledging himself to love and cherish Sue.

Nevertheless, John always performed the task

allotted to him, and on this warm evening he and Glen, in their white waistcoats and dinner jackets, were walking towards the Ambury Darrows' just as the sun was setting. Not a leaf stirred. The great trees stood motionless, their tops holding the light and glow, while at their base their outlines began already to melt into the gloom of the forest behind them.

"Yes," Glen went on, "Sue almost saved my life. I am grateful to her. She is a superior woman. I wonder — if a fellow has any right to wonder about such a thing — whether she has ever had an offer of marriage?"

"I have not the faintest idea," John murmured, with a visible effort to detach himself from any show of interest in the subject.

"I do really feel," Glen pursued, "that a man has a duty in such matters. When we see a valuable, excellent creature, full of resource, energy, and will, we ought to feel that it is wrong that she should be excluded from the highest possibilities of a woman's life."

"Oh, come, Glen, you are talking for the sake of talking."

"We have it in our power to regulate and harmonize things, to give a certain roundness and symmetry to — to — Hang it, where is my flow of ideas?" said Glen. "I wonder, now, if Gatty has ever had a love affair?"

"It has surprised me that nobody seems to run after Gatty, for she is young, good-looking, rather

pleasing at times, and Ambury Darrow has money enough to give each of the girls a handsome *dot*."

"Now I wonder how many offers Conny has had?" mused Glen.

"Constance Bertini?"

"Constance Bertini."

"Well, we seem to know of three," said Haliburton, smiling.

"Count out mine. I dare say she has had twenty, at least. How unfair it is. I declare it's a crying shame."

They were already at the house, where they were received like the dew from heaven. Ambury Darrow sat adoring his womenkind, who grouped about him in their white evening gowns, superabundant in flesh, color, spirits, talk, and gestures. It has been remarked that Mrs. Darrow rarely said much in her husband's presence, having her own times and seasons. He considered her a delightful creature, clever in her way, — silly, possibly, in other people's; but, however lacking in sense, she had given him these three splendid daughters, and he worshiped her accordingly.

"Take Mrs. Darrow out, John," he said to Haliburton. "Sue shall come along with me, but she shall sit next to you. Milly dear, here is my other arm; and Gatty, as you are young and foolish, you shall have Glen all to yourself."

Thus Haliburton and Sue Darrow were on one side of the table; on the other Glen sat between Millicent and Agatha. Ambury Darrow was the

talking partner of the firm. He had all knowledge for his province. Around each new case which offered were clustered a new set of facts and ideas of which he must be master. He and Haliburton had now a suit before the courts in which they were protecting the rights of an electrician, and Ambury took this opportunity of handling a great mass of newly acquired facts. He knew everything about electricity from the beginning to its latest up-to-date discovery, and he even grasped its potentialities for the future. He sat talking, illustrating the subject by all the tumblers, wine-glasses, decanters, and bits of silver within reach. Practically there was no limit to what electricity was to do for our comfort, our convenience, in the way of heat, light, transportation, service. But that was merely the beginning. Science was confronted with a new set of proofs, demonstrations, and facts, which science would presently know how to meet and make use of, enlarging human life to the vastest capacities and even throwing new light on the occult, the shadowy realms of the unseen but dimly felt.

Where Ambury Darrow could go his daughters could follow, with even more dash and dare, plunging into depths not before sounded. The conversation went on all through the meal: what electric waves had done, what electric waves could do; what their discovery explained about phenomena mysterious and often weird in the past, what promises of fresh miracles they offered for the future.

The background of dimly descried and feebly comprehended forces, from which had beckoned the miracles of Buddhism, spiritualism, faith-cures, and Christian Science, all was made readily compatible with every-day existence. They all seemed to feel a vaster promise in life, a more assured future.

Glen listened, saying little. Haliburton accepted here and there a fact, then rested. It was interesting to them both to see how Ambury Darrow's daughters flung themselves into the subject, and were carried to its top wave; how clearly they grasped the idea, and how lucidly they illustrated, not only its prose, but its sublimity, its emotion.

"It's something to have three girls like mine," Ambury Darrow said when the ladies had left the table. "I can talk on any subject with them. They are never at a loss."

"Certainly," Glen observed, "Dick Steele could easily have said, that to love one of them was a liberal education." He glanced at John as he spoke. "As Rip Van Winkle said of a different sort of women, 'What wives they would make!'"

"Now there is Sue," the proud father continued; "if we could only take her in as partner, John, she would surprise us by her swift insight. There's a deal of wisdom in her."

"What a wife she would make for John," Glen murmured under his breath. "That is what I am thinking of."

"Precious few men would come up to my stand-

ard," said Ambury Darrow. "I know men, and I know my girls are too clever, not to say too good, for the most of them."

"How about John?" Glen asked.

"Present company always excepted," said Ambury Darrow.

They went in to join the ladies, but Glen, instead of sitting down, stepped out of the open French window, and called "Agatha."

She came to his side.

"Would it be too old-fashioned and unadvanced if I asked you to go down the lawn with me? I'm an old fellow, but when I was young we used to do such things."

"No," said Agatha.

"Don't you want to go, John?" Sue inquired. "I feel anxious about Glen."

Haliburton put himself at Miss Darrow's service on the instant.

"Go on, you two," said Glen. "We will follow." He took Agatha's hand and put it under his arm. "Do you suppose," he said to her as they sauntered down the path, "that Sue has any electrical apparatus in her pocket which will enable her to hear what I say? For when I walk in the moonlight with a charming young woman I wish to keep my conversation for the exclusive ear of the charming young woman."

"Dear me! Do you call me a charming young woman?"

"I did think so," said Glen. "When I first

clapped my eyes on you to-night I said to myself, 'How pretty Gatty looks. I am going to indulge myself by flirting with her a little.' "

"Why haven't you?"

"I had no chance," said Glen. "We have been talking such dismal things. I hate your electricity and all your science. How could a man venture to whisper flatteries to a girl who knows all about induced currents and electric waves?"

"You would whisper flatteries to a girl who knew about the moon."

"The moon still passes muster as a romantic subject, although so much is known to its discredit nowadays that I do not so much object to its being put out by electric light. But oh, to live at a period when women — men, too, for that matter — knew nothing! When even the origin of the sweet, silver light of the moon was a mere clever conceit, a poetic fancy, a shrewd guess! Then you and I might have had a thrill of emotion walking along here together. That is, — I might." They had come into the full blaze of the low summer moon. "How well you look, Gatty," he said, stopping short in the path and letting his eyes rest on her.

"My white frock, you mean?"

"Do you call it a frock?"

"One has so many wash dresses, one cannot take them seriously enough to call them gowns."

"I like this," said Glen pensively. "I don't think I could ever make love to a girl in a tailor-made gown."

"That is why I like to wear them."

"You do not want men to make love to you?"

"You know that I do not."

"Then you should n't put on these alluring white frocks. I could make love to you very easily."

"Oh, well, make love a little if you like," said Gatty. "I don't mind you."

"No, you don't mind me. I am an old fellow and I am safe. But I have been thinking, ever since I heard you say you would not marry until you were thirty-five, that it was a shame you should postpone somebody's felicity until then. How do you manage? Do you shut up your heart?"

"Lock it up and throw the key away."

"Do you ever read poetry?"

"Oh yes."

"Novels?"

"Plenty of them."

"Do they thrill you?"

"Perhaps so, — a little. Then I say to myself, 'This love they talk about is a fable agreed upon.'"

"You mean it does n't exist?"

"Even a fable has a sort of existence. It is useful in literature and art."

"Well, yes. Take love out of literature and art and there would be rather a blank."

"Art would survive better than literature," said Agatha, alert and interested at once; "for maternal love would be left, and the best pictures of the world have that for their motive."

"Does n't maternal love presuppose a woman's love for a man?" demanded Glen.

"Maternal love is the one reality of a woman's life," said Agatha; "I might say it is the one reality of all human life, — not only of human life, but of all life."

"Oh, don't go off into scientific theory again," said Glen; "you make life horribly hideous among you. You women do not stick at a trifle. Let us go back to your first premise — 'This love they talk about is a fable agreed upon.' You mean it can't be seen, heard, felt, touched, or tasted."

"Well, at a venture, no," said Agatha.

"Life is perfectly satisfactory to you, then," said Glen. "You get up in the morning; you look out on a day such as this: nothing animates and stirs your heart which you do not quite define; no promise of something almost within reach. There is no sense of hollowness, of incompleteness in the every-day task."

"Do you call that love?" demanded Agatha. "Of course there is in life a baffling sense of not being able quite to get what one wants out of fine weather, — there is a sort of melancholy in the way the shadows creep up the lawn in the afternoon."

"Now just define that melancholy," said Glen. "Nature gives us that sensation of longing; it is not quite enough to us that the world is beautiful. Perhaps the trouble is that she has been beautiful to so many; that she is so old; that she knows all the secrets of life and death, — not only the life and

death of generations, but that she means presently to absorb us, — that after a little interval we shall be a part of her, —

‘Rolled round in earth’s diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees.’

No, Nature draws us, she holds us, but she also threatens. You don’t feel a shudder at this moment, Gatty?”

“No.”

“That is because we are together. We are conscious of each other. We give each other solace and hope. You are leaning on my arm; you are listening to me, and I am looking into your face; we are thinking and feeling.” He broke off and laughed. “What is it? Why do you wish to take your hand away?”

“Because you” —

“Because I am talking about the palpableness of love?”

“I should say that you were proving the impalpableness of love.”

“Quite the contrary. You have admitted that Nature stirs, troubles, perplexes; that we long to clasp her, but cannot clasp what is so big, so vast, so little responsive; that what contents us is the being together, the feeling that we can clasp hands; that we are not infinite, but finite; that” —

At this moment a voice called, —

“Glen, I think you have been out long enough. It is distinctly cooler.”

“Yes, yes, dear Sue,” Glen answered soothingly.

"We are coming directly." Nevertheless, he and Agatha took the loop at the end of the path and vanished into the shimmering half light among the shrubberies. Fifteen minutes later, when they neared the house, they were walking apart and were both silent. Glen, however, seemed in high spirits, while Agatha looked rather excited.

Other visitors had come in, and everybody was eating frozen peaches. Haliburton and Glen exchanged a glance, and then prepared to take leave. Glen told everybody he had had a charming evening, and in bidding Agatha, in particular, good-night, thanked her for a really delightful old-fashioned time.

"What were you and Agatha talking about?" Haliburton inquired on their way home.

"Love," said Glen. "Were you and Sue also?"

"We were not," Haliburton replied succinctly; then, after a moment, he added, "We were talking of subjects we both understand, — the children's hospital, and so forth."

"You would have found," said Glen, "that her intuitions about love were more entertaining than" —

"I don't go about flirting with every woman I meet," Haliburton said, with some energy.

"I do," said Glen. "Then, don't you see, they know what to expect."

CHAPTER XII.

KITTY FINDS HER WINGS.

FOR once in her regular life Constance was late to breakfast.

When she opened her eyes that morning, she saw Kitty sitting cross-legged at the foot of her bed, clasping a white dove against her breast.

Constance, startled, reached out her arms. "Why, dearest child, is it so late?" she asked.

"No, not late. I am up and dressed early," Kitty replied.

Constance still flushed with sleep, in a rumple of cambric and lace, lay back on her pillows, smiling, yet with a stirring of the maternal instinct that Kitty wished to tell her something, and had availed herself of this sure opportunity. What could it be? Conjectures flashed through her mind.

"Well, dear little girl?" she said softly.

"But, really, *mamma mia*, I am no longer such a very little girl." Kitty, as she said this, blushed furiously. Constance had never before seen just that sort of blush on Kitty's face. She knew the shy blush, the blush of embarrassment, the blush of sudden feeling. This was different.

"Oh, that was what I noticed unusual about

you. You have put your braids on your head. But, however grown up you may be, I expect to go on calling you my dear little girl all my life. You cannot begin to know how precious the words are to me."

"But I feel old, — quite old."

"That is because you are so very young. The really older you grow you will discover that being grown up is only a fashion of speaking. Life remains always for most people a little experimental. The supreme comfort is to feel that there is some one close, near, strong, and sure, capable of judging for us and, if need be, of protecting us."

Kitty gave a deep sigh.

"Yes, I suppose that is the reason why women marry," she observed in a tone of peculiar satisfaction which roused expectation. Constance pondered the remark for a moment, speculating upon the idea behind it, then said, —

"I married your papa particularly for that reason. I knew that he was strong and wise, and I had a horrible feeling of littleness in the big world."

A little childish laugh fluttered from Kitty.

"Mamma, I should like to marry cousin Glen."

"Marry cousin Glen?"

"Yes."

The words had struck Constance with a sharp surprise, yet she at first believed that they were the mere effervescence of childish mischief.

"What has put such an idea into your head?"

she asked. But as their eyes met, she saw that Kitty's were shining; that her cheeks were of shell-pink brightness; that there was a soft tremulousness about her lips.

"I love him so dearly, mamma."

Constance looked at Kitty with a face that was frightened rather than angry, bewildered, perhaps, rather than frightened. Kitty was trembling from head to foot, trembling so that the dove escaped from her clasp, flew and alighted on the top of the toilet-glass.

After remaining for a moment in doubt how to answer, Constance said in a quiet way, —

"Of course we all love Glen. He has the trick of making everybody love him. He has not done half or a quarter of what he ought to have done with his rather unusual powers, but we forgive him because he is just what he is, — getting his own sort of pleasure and satisfaction out of life, but frankly confessing that he is a failure. I don't suppose, dear, he ever said anything about marrying anybody."

"No, — not exactly."

"How very droll of you to suggest such a thing!"

"He says he is so lonely," Kitty burst out.

"He likes to have me with him. He knows I love him dearly; that I feel so sorry for him."

"I should have said Glen was the least lonely man I know. He has a whimsical way of talking; makes much out of nothing simply in order to be amusing. He is an endless reader, or give him a

good photograph, etching, or engraving, and he is happy for days. Just to lie on his back, and look at the sky satisfies him. Then he has Mr. Haliburton, who is simply the kindest brother in the world. And, although I have no right to say that any one is happy or miserable against his or her own statement of the case, I still consider Glen very well suited with his life. So I advise you to bestow your pity on somebody who needs it." Constance paused a moment, just long enough to give weight to what she was about to add. "Above all, do not fancy that he wishes to marry any one. A wife would be very much in his way,—or rather quite out of his way."

There was a curious pain and perplexity in Kitty's face,—a questioning of her words that hurt Constance.

"Mamma, I do not think you know him as well as I know him," the young girl said, with decision ; then, having said it, she cast down her eyes, but her whole face retained an expression of quiet resolution.

"Tell me all about it, dear," said Constance. She was trying her wits at the puzzle. There seemed to be some jugglery, some magic she did not understand. She would have said that Kitty had hardly ever been alone with Glen except on the night of Haliburton's little dinner and two or three similar occasions. By a few adroit questions she elicited a full confidence. Glen had begun by finding fault with Kitty ; he had laughed at her,

criticised her ; he had a way of looking at her with his eyes half closed, and seeming to deride her. She had been shy, almost ashamed in his presence. Finally, however, she had found that he always watched for her, and seemed to wait ; and presently she began to believe that, after all, he was rather well pleased with her. Even when he had been harsh, his tone and glance would drop into blissful gentleness. And once he had even gone so far as to say she was pretty, — that she charmed him, at least for a moment. He had asked her questions about her reading ; they had once read a few pages of the “ *Vita Nuova* ” together, — just to brush up his Italian, he said. He had made her play to him both on the piano and the violin. Then, finally, a little more had come out, and Kitty told of the scene in Haliburton’s garden, now ten days old.

“ You say you kissed him ? ” Constance exclaimed.

Kitty, with a shy candor which still had something of mischief in it, explained that it was just an impulse ; that her touch was so gentle she did not awake him. By degrees she told everything that had passed between them at that interview.

No stroke of misfortune seemed at the moment so inconceivable to Constance as that Kitty had not been guarded from such an indiscretion. It was horrible to picture the act of the kiss bestowed. Still it was laughably absurd, and nothing could have been more innocent. Constance was absolutely rational ; she meant to be a woman of the

world, yet this confession gave her a feeling like a physical chill.

"Was he asleep or awake when you — kissed him?" she inquired. She quivered as she spoke the word.

"I am sure he was asleep," faltered Kitty.

"Had he been awake he would have known that it was a childish way of showing your sympathy, your pity. It would be embarrassing to a man to be kissed out of pity by anybody but the merest child."

"Oh, he thinks I am a child," Kitty murmured. She smiled at the recollection. "I think he wants me to be a child. He says he hates to think of my growing up."

The dove began to circle restlessly round and round the room, beating its wings and head against the ceiling. Kitty flung the shutters of both windows wide open that it might fly forth. The long shafts of sunlight, the call of birds, the morning breeze that entered fluttering and set the curtains and the toilet hangings swaying, seemed to be a message from the outside world, a message that was healthy and reviving.

"If he was not asleep he pretended to be asleep, and said nothing about it," Kitty now confessed, a little shamefacedly.

"I would not have my Kitty anything less than warm-hearted. Only one stops before committing absurdities, — one holds one's self in check," Constance said quietly.

"But, mamma, I felt so sorry for him, I" —

“These little matters have been arranged for us. Ever since society began men and women have been accumulating experience. It saves a great deal of trouble. For a girl or a woman to make any sort of an advance to a man robs her of charm. Do you wish to eat the grapes that fall of their own accord, or do you reach instead to get the highest bunch with the untouched bloom upon it?”

Constance felt herself to be a poor duenna. Even while she imposed her views with the assumption that they must necessarily be accepted as the law, she was yet fully conscious that she was addressing an alert mind, already half intoxicated by a sense that it could feel for itself, judge for itself. How not to destroy that half infancy of the heart she had tried to guard ; how to make the case clear without either magnifying a childish impulse or seeming not to attach sufficient importance to it ?

The dove, after exhausting its strength in beating against the cornice, dropped to rest upon the back of a chair, espied the open window, and darted forth ; Kitty, standing by the window, laughed with pleasure at the swift-winged flight into the blue.

Constance, looking at the girl, was startled by a sudden conviction that she was almost beautiful. The poise of her figure as she stood leaning out was so graceful, so elastic ; her complexion was so delicate ; her eyes and smile had gained somehow at once so much softness besides their old dazzling charm. Even her hands and wrists had rounded and become pretty. Had Glen actually amused himself

by making love to Kitty? No man sees beauty unmoved, — certainly not a poet like Glen, who was always too sensitive, too emotional. Constance, after having said to herself ever since Kitty was a child that she really believed Kitty would be actually pretty when she was grown up, realized that the time had come when the bud of beauty was ready to burst forth. Seen at this moment the young girl was too sweet to be looked at coldly; an advance from her could not be less than seductive to the head and heart of any man alive.

"Kitty!" she called. Kitty turned and saw her mother's arms wide open. She gave a little gasp of feeling; her whole expression was suddenly transfigured into childish gratitude.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, "you do love me? You are not really shocked at me?" She nestled into the open arms.

"It was just because I have kept you a little girl too long," Constance murmured presently. "I have not said, 'You are a woman, and must hold yourself precious.' Of course when womanhood comes it is something far better than childhood. But it robs us of as much as it gives us. So I waited. I have so loved to feel that I was all in all to you, just as you are all in all to me." They clung to each other, one wet cheek against the other wet cheek. "I have said to myself," Constance went on, "that by and by, years hence, some other fate would come, — something sweeter, something perhaps dearer; but oh, something so much more dif-

ficult. I wanted to put off the thought of it as long as we might, — never taking one step towards that other destiny, — letting it come all the way towards you. ‘Twenty-five is young enough for my Kitty to think of marriage,’ I said, — I who knew what it was to be hurried into marriage when I was a mere child. I had no mother. My father was ill; he was glad to have me settled. He wanted your uncle Richard to come back to the house here and live. It was almost as if everybody longed to be rid of me.”

She paused and waited for a word from Kitty. When no response came, not even a closer pressure, Constance drew back and looked into Kitty’s face. The eyes met hers unfalteringly.

“Speak, Kitty,” she said, yearning for a full surrender of every thought and struggling fancy in the young girl’s mind.

“But I have nothing to say.”

“What are you thinking?”

“I do not seem to be thinking any one clear thought.”

“But you love me?”

“Oh, I love you dearly.”

“You accept what I say?”

“Oh yes, *mamma mia*.”

Constance, sounding the answer through, had an instinct that there was some slight reservation.

“Promise me one thing, Kitty.”

“I promise, — I promise almost everything, *mamma*.”

"Promise me that you will never, — but oh, my child! To have to tell my sweet, proud, high-bred Kitty to lock up all her sweetness, to begrudge a touch of her hand, to keep her lips sacred!"

"I promise everything except not to love Glen, mamma. I would rather die than not love him."

As she spoke her dark eyelashes lifted full on Constance, then dropped.

"But you promise what I ask?"

"I promise."

"And feel this, dear, — that finally when you are chosen and have the right to choose, you must take some one to whom you look up, to whom your soul strives upward, as a seed in the earth towards light and warmth."

"That is the way I feel towards cousin Glen."

"Cousin Glen is charming. Of course as he is twenty years and more older than you are he belongs to a different generation. I never came across a man who is pleasanter as a friend than Glen, — as a cousin, as a dropper-in, an habitu  , he is perfect. He is clever, far cleverer than he gives himself out to be. He is also a complete man of the world, — fastidious, critical, a man with all his wits about him. His heart and lungs may not be of the strongest, but his head is all there. Nobody is so ready in conversation; if he chooses to be silent it is because something jars, offends his taste. If he sometimes seems to give himself away, it is because he enjoys ease, abandon, *laissez-aller*. He commits himself to verbal absurdity,

just as a different man likes to stretch himself out and put his feet on the table. He has not only an artistic but a scientific appreciation of the good things of life. He likes everything of the best, from a dinner to a woman's gown, manners, voice. You cannot begin to think, dear, how nice his taste is about women."

A sob startled her. Kitty's hand, clasped in hers, had suddenly grown icy cold.

"Now I must dress," said Constance, first drawing her child closer, kissing her on her lips and eyes, and then releasing her.

It was the signal of dismissal to Kitty, but, left alone, Constance was besieged by doubts and fears. Had she not said too much? Had she not possibly vitalized what had before had only the most shadowy and problematical existence? Her habit of counteracting a tendency by a word, of hedging off one danger by opening up some attractive and safer vista, had led her to act with promptness; but had she not obeyed the quick dread of her prophetic mind instead of proceeding on a cool, rational plan?

It humiliated her that all through this interview with Kitty the thought of Mrs. Darrow had intruded itself. Yesterday she had been ready to smile at Mrs. Darrow's questioning whether Constance was bracing her daughter for life by a clear fore-knowledge of her own needs, her own possibilities. This experience mocked Constance, as if it were Mrs. Darrow's triumphant repartee.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW-FOUND WINGS ARE CLIPPED.

SHE found Kitty at the table presently, making coffee for her uncle, who had to go to town. Five minutes later John Haliburton, followed by Glendenning Rennie, walked in through the open French window. To see Glen entering in a Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers of brown velveteen was to Constance like coming out of a painful nightmare to find the object of the bad dream smiling at her bedside. The two men had come to invite the marchesa, Kitty, and Richard Amory, to go on a picnic excursion to Governor's Seat. John was to drive Ambury Darrow's four-in-hand, while Teddy was to conduct his mother and her three guests in their high drag.

Richard Amory pleaded business, and set off for the station in the pony-carriage which was waiting. Constance accepted Haliburton's invitation for herself and Kitty.

"If I had asked you to go with me, should you have accepted, Conny?" Glen inquired, with child-like *naïveté*.

"Do you mean if you held the reins?"

"Of course."

"I do not, perhaps, love my life more than other people love theirs, but I confess I should n't like to put it, much less Kitty's, at the mercy of your possibly not knowing your right hand from your left."

"Now that is just the difference between me and John," said Glen, as if highly flattered. "He looks responsible; I don't look responsible. The fact is, I cultivate a sort of devil-may-care irresponsibility simply because I don't wish to be bored. But it does amuse me to see how everybody is imposed upon by John — except me, that is: I know him. A man is no hero to his chum, — to the fellow who has to steal down in the mellow midnight and bring him up pies and bottles of beer. I help him out all I can, inflate his balloon, act as if I, too, believed in him. He has a way of looking at times as if he were going to say something uncommonly shrewd; but I put it to you, Conny, does he ever say it, unless, that is, I am by to give him a hint?"

"Oh, we know how clever you are, Glen, — just like one of those dogs who are too clever to learn tricks."

"It needs a stupid, well-meaning dog like John to sit on his tail and give his fore paw," said Glen. "Everybody thinks what a husband and father of a family he will make. I suppose he has announced his approaching marriage to you?"

"Come, Glen," said Haliburton.

"See him blush! He need n't pretend he and

she did n't make it up together last night in the garden. I saw her give him a flower. I saw it with my own eyes. I give you my word, Conny, that Gatty and I have been perfectly worn out, of late, playing propriety, — following John and Sue about until I am ready to drop, and have to plead invalidism, and tell them it is time for me to be in my bed. Just keep an eye on them to-day. In fact, I arranged this drive and picnic in order to give them a chance. Sue says John is shy, — needs to be encouraged, brought forward."

"You see, marchesa," Haliburton put in, "Glen owes Miss Darrow such a debt of gratitude for nursing him that week he was ill, it disturbs his conscience. He wants me to pay it."

"Nobody wants to marry me," said Glen, "whereas every sensible woman wants to marry John. He ought to be permitted to have twenty wives."

"One will suffice, I thank you."

"All I am insisting on is that you shall begin, at any rate, by marrying Sue. In fact, I consider that matter settled. I will tell Ambury to fix the day, and John shall be ready." Glen had announced, on entering, that he had got well at a gallop. He was apparently not only in fine health, but in the highest possible spirits; and, after Haliburton had gone back to his own house to conclude his preparations, Glen sat with Constance and Kitty, drinking an extra cup of coffee to keep them company as they ate their breakfast, all the

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time discussing what he called "John's marriage," and speculating what Dilsey and his wife would say and do, with a whim and audacity which made Kitty's rather pale face light up into color, smiles, and laughter.

So far as Constance had observed, — and all her faculties were alert, — the only time Glen had addressed Kitty particularly had been on his entrance, when he had said, "Well, monkey, why have you put your braids on top of your head?"

Constance was nervously on guard, and yet anxious to show no watchfulness. She tingled still, as from a blow; but little by little her fear that there was something real to be dreaded died away. If Kitty had at first dropped her eyelids and looked pale and weary, by this time either she had turned her thrill of mortification into a spur or she had forgotten. At any rate Constance rejoiced that she showed no wounded egoism, no soreness of feeling, — was evidently bent on not behaving foolishly. The two set about packing a hamper for the picnic, Glen calling for unheard-of delicacies, — *pâté de foie gras*, potted shrimps, stuffed anchovies, caviare, and the like. But when they went upstairs finally to dress for the drive, Kitty put her hands on her mother's shoulder, and said, —

"Should you rather have me stay at home, mamma?"

"Stay at home? All my pleasure in going is that you will go."

"I thought perhaps" —

"Do not think; that is, do not think anything except that we have always done everything together; that we have no comfort except in doing everything together. I care for nothing without my Kitty; I want my Kitty to care for nothing without me."

They laughed as they clung to each other, with eyes brimming over. But the hands Constance pressed still quivered, and she felt that although Kitty was in her arms, somehow she did not wholly hold her, — that what she said did not reach her.

She postponed all analysis of the situation, however, saying to herself that she had had no time really to think it over. This state of mind was altogether new. Kitty's being in love with Glen was not so much what troubled her as that the young girl was thinking of love at all. She had known that Kitty was ardent, inflammable in her likes, spending passion on her love of books, of music, of everything out of doors. That she had apprehended any needs or wishes beyond these limitations was a rebuke to Constance, since she believed that a girl's unsolicited intensity of feeling for a man could only be the result of not knowing what else to do with her faculties and powers.

Then, again, she caught herself up as her mind turned these thoughts over and over, and said that she must wait, must watch, must consider. She told Kitty to put on her white serge suit, and observed with satisfaction that the young girl dressed at

her usual scamper, without any of the deliberation of a woman who is conscious that she is presently to meet a man before whom she is anxious to appear at her best. She looked charming, nevertheless. The white serge jacket, just touched with black velvet at neck, belt, and wrist, became her; also the white sailor hat wound about with a scarf of fleecy white. Constance said to herself there was no commonplace vanity in her daughter as she came up, asking: —

“Shall I do, mamma?”

“Oh, yes, you will do,” Constance returned, looking her over.

Kitty’s eyes dropped before hers.

“I am afraid, my child, you are tormenting yourself a little.”

“A little, mamma.”

“Try to rise above it. Say to yourself, ‘It is so good to live in this world.’ Life is too short even to begin to feel how lovely and interesting it all is. Especially life is too short for us to love and do for those who are close and near to us. And remember that there is one certain misery, — that is to think first of ourselves; and that there is one certain happiness, — that is to live for others.”

Kitty kept her eyes fixed on her mother as she spoke, as if a conviction of the truth of her words was penetrating her. Constance told her to go down, and she would follow presently. When she descended, she saw that Mrs. Edward Darrow’s equipage was on the drive below the terrace.

Teddy was talking with Kitty. He ran eagerly towards Constance as she emerged from the house.

"Marchesa," he said, "my mother begs the favor that you will let Miss Kitty go with us. The coach is rather full."

Constance looked at Kitty.

"May I not go with Mrs. Edward Darrow?" the girl asked, with an animation almost equal to Teddy's.

Constance was conscious not only of a fresh surprise, but of a sharp sense of disappointment; still there was nothing else to do except to acquiesce in this arrangement. She stood watching Kitty as, just touching Teddy's hand, she sprang to the seat in front, meeting Mrs. Edward Darrow's greetings with a pleased, graceful glance of recognition. Teddy followed; the man at the head of the spirited horses jumped up behind, and they were off. Again Constance suffered the return of the sensation that something interposed between her and Kitty; she missed the cheerful warmth of the companionship that made her life. Still, she exulted that Kitty looked so well, and confessed to herself that there was a certain fittingness in the way she contrasted with the strong, active young man. Until to-day Constance had eagerly watched for the woman in her child; now she even more longingly watched for the child looking out of the woman. She was so taken possession of by these new ideas, fancies, alarms, that she stood almost forgetting where she was or what was happening.

Somebody addressed her, and she turned. It was Glen.

"So Kitty has gone off with that young donkey," he exclaimed, with intense dissatisfaction. "Do you trust his driving?"

"I trust nothing and nobody," Constance replied, with a half laugh. "I did not like it at all. I dare say he knows how to drive; he has driven all his life. But I do not approve of Kitty's doing anything without me. I feel like the hen with a chick that turns out a duck and takes to water."

"So do I," said Glen. "I got up the picnic because I felt like behaving as if I were ten years old. I was inclined to climb trees and wade in the brook. Everybody save Kitty is so old, — or, if not old, so wise. Oh, how I hate that floppy tadpole of a boy."

Constance laughed and turned to Glen as he spoke, and he was startled by the dewy brilliance of her eyes and the bright spot of color burning on each cheek. It now occurred to him that she realized something momentous in Kitty's going with Teddy, perhaps detecting in him an aspirant for Kitty's favor; that she was startled, if not displeased. He himself was conscious of missing all that was to have given the expedition zest and flavor. Here was Kitty, who had of late seemed to have eyes and ears only for himself, changing the whole order of things, upsetting all his wishes and calculations. No wonder Glen was flatly disgusted, and although at this moment he was look-

ing at the marchesa, quite conscious of her beauty, he was not thinking at all of the woman who had been his first love, his enchantress, but only of his own little Kitty who had deserted him for that stolid athlete.

But Haliburton, with the three Misses Darrow and their party, was waiting ; the four horses were prancing, curveting, feeling the wind in their faces and longing to be free. Constance was lifted to the box. Glen clambered in beside Agatha, up sprang the two grooms, and off they went.

“Are you quite well, marchesa?” Haliburton said, bending towards Constance.

“Oh, quite well, — perhaps not talkative.”

“You shall have silence, then.”

“Oh, you shall talk.”

“I never do talk, you know, — and certainly not to-day, when I see that something is troubling you.”

There had been a thunder-shower the afternoon before, everything had been freshened by the rain, and to-day the air seemed pure and clear, as if it blew from a mountain top. Masses of the whitest, fleeci-est vapor passed from shape to shape, the vagrant impulses of the wind keeping them in full motion. On both sides of the road were pleasant country places, with soft, level lawns, shrubberies, and flower-beds in which were massed blossoms that made a blaze of color. Alternating with these country-seats were spaces of real sylvan woodland and sunny pasture lands. They were gaining higher

and higher views as they went on, and could see farther and farther reaches of the great billowy landscape rolling away to the horizon, crested here and there with forest or make-believe castellated and battlemented tower. The post of honor had been yielded to the marchesa, but Miss Darrow, sitting just behind her, was not unobservant of the very indifferent acknowledgment made by the chief guest of the civility paid her. Constance sat with the fine graciousness which always characterized her; she looked well, if not at her best, in her walking-hat with plumes and silk dust-cloak; but she made not the slightest effort to entertain Haliburton, although from time to time he glanced towards her, then, seeing only her profile, looked away.

Sue's instincts were all awake: John was driving her father's horses; he was doing his best; that he should have no reward pained her. To see any possible breach was for Miss Darrow to be impelled to fling herself in; accordingly she addressed herself to the task which the marchesa slighted, not to say shirked. Leaning forward she began to talk, and talked, as she always talked, fluently and well. She was as various as are the scraps of information which are put under the general head of "Things wise and otherwise" in a newspaper column. Thus Haliburton, for whom Constance's mood possessed the charm and mystery of a night with stars shining, found his ears assailed by Miss Darrow's views on the subject of whether sugar-beet raising would be likely to pay;

how the rural population could best be kept contented in the country, and other modern problems. Constance presently grew interested. It was in fact so little her habit to feel there were no social demands upon her, it had seemed like the veriest self-indulgence to sit quiet, looking at the landscape, not thinking, — only feeling. Nothing had happened to warrant this alarm, this passionate surprise that fate was overtaking her. She made an effort to regain her ordinary poise, and soon was quite her usual self.

Twice Teddy's drag allowed the coach to pass it so that the occupants could exchange greetings. Glen each time devoted himself to blowing the horn with a triumphant air.

"How well Kitty looks to-day," Sue Darrow said, addressing Constance. "Quite the conventional young lady."

"Like a little blue-blooded *grande dame*," said Gatty.

"The black and white of her dress seems to throw her into high relief," said Millicent.

"And all that," said Glen, with intense disgust, "is being wasted on Teddy Darrow."

"She is not thrown away on Teddy," observed Haliburton.

"I was thinking how well she and Teddy were contrasted," said Agatha.

"You mean she is cut like an intaglio in a gem ; he is unhewn rough stone !" Glen observed.

"Teddy may be rough-hewn, but he will come out all right," Agatha returned.

"Teddy is not dull; Teddy is rather clever in his way," Sue affirmed, and her sisters followed suit.

"Teddy is so honest, so true, so single-hearted."

"Poppa says he knows nobody more likely to succeed in life than Teddy."

"Oh, I grant all that," said Glen, "and also that Teddy is a capital youngster, full of ability, good sense, and heart. The only thing is, I hate youngsters treading on our toes. I should like to proclaim a massacre of the innocents."

Teddy, meanwhile, quite unwitting of Glen's jealousy, was conscious of an intoxication,—at least something had gone to his head. He liked the day which maintained its freshness; he enjoyed the breeze cooler than the general air. His horses pulled at their bits, and, superadded to the satisfaction in having them perfectly under his control, was the thrill of having Kitty for the first time actually within reach, to be looked at, studied, talked to.

Usually Kitty was so elusive she suggested a winged creature, a bird, a butterfly, sometimes something perilously endowed with a sting. To-day the puzzling, comfortless, but fascinating creature he had so often followed up in vain was more accessible. Her well-gloved little hands lay folded in her lap; her gaze was fixed on the horizon. When they passed and repassed the coach, she exchanged a smile with her mother, but looked at no one else. Yet in spite of her quietude she was exquisitely polite, replying to everybody's civil

speeches with her characteristic touch of foreign warmth and grace. There was always just enough of this suggestion of a different breeding, a different race in Kitty to compel the admiration of the matter-of-fact, rather wooden Teddy; — a simpler elegance than that of others, a trifle more of gesture, of accentuation of speech. He felt, too, rather than saw, that in her nature there was more color than in his mother's, for example, a promise that she would ultimately develop into all that was most attractive.

Nevertheless, Teddy saw to-day, with some alarm mixed with his admiration, that the young lady was maturing rapidly. He was not ready to have her quite grown up yet. He wished to have her halt just on the threshold of womanhood. His own dependence and limitations were impressed not only upon his own consciousness, but upon that of others, by the presence of Mrs. Edward Darrow — a large, serene woman, who liked subservience, could not always command it, so enforced it when it was possible. She adored her son, yet she governed him and intended to govern him. She had assented when Teddy had begged her to take Kitty to-day. The girl's air of distinction and vivid look were not lost upon Mrs. Edward Darrow. She and the marchesa were exactly of the same age. She had been Constance Amory's bridesmaid when she married her cousin Philip twenty-two years before, and ten days later she herself had become the bride of Edward Darrow. Now

they were both widows, and she was more than a little curious about the marchesa, wondering at her freshness, her versatility, her apparent lightness of heart as well as brightness of mind. Experience seemed to have braced and freshened Constance, while Mrs. Edward Darrow, despite an unlimited income, two regular establishments, besides a seaside cottage, frequent trips to Europe, and seasons in London, had found life rather a meaningless affair, meeting everywhere the same dullness and the heavy conviction that she failed in impressiveness. She had been in the habit of thinking that if poor Edward had only lived, all would have been so different; but here was Constance Bertini, not only a widow but a poor widow, who had never in her life had more than three thousand a year; yet everybody seemed to be so tremendously struck by her. Perhaps Kitty might inherit some of her mother's distinction and become an imposing wife for Teddy.

However, Teddy was still a boy; he was her son; he had nothing but what she chose to allow him; he was now driving her horses. In spite of her smooth contours and large serenity, Mrs. Edward Darrow was the victim of nervous terrors and was constantly saying, —

“Teddy, Teddy, slow up a little.”

“Now, Teddy, do not take that turn as sharply as you did the last.”

“Teddy, don't forget that Wellington will not take the whip. Give Blücher the least touch.”

The pair in front behaved with compact simplicity. Teddy made an occasional remark, to which Kitty responded by "Yes" or "No." It had been a relief to accept the invitation to join the Edward Darrows. When Glen had come in at breakfast, her heart began to beat so fast, she was so filled with something half pain, half joyful emotion, that she had hardly permitted herself to look up. If she had met his glance and smile she was sure she must have laughed or cried. As it was, nobody had observed that her hands trembled, that her lips fell apart, that she almost uttered a gasp. So, having suffered, it was something not to renew the ordeal. Her mother's seriousness had given her a vague alarm. She had no thought of playing a coquettish trick by coming with Teddy. She was so utterly inexperienced, it was impossible for her to understand clearly just in what she was at fault. She had promised her mother something; she hardly knew what it was. She had not promised not to go on loving Glen, — indeed the marchesa had granted that everybody loved cousin Glen. One would need to be eighteen, — to have taken the outside things of life with a joyful superficiality of pleasure, to have been kept from over-inquisitive questionings, from morbid introspection, by constant association with a mind which guided and strengthened; yet suddenly to have had a hint of what life is and to have entered into the new idea with an enthusiasm of feeling, an ardor of curiosity, — in order to know what Kitty's impulse

had been. She had fallen under the charm of Glen's easy good looks. He had of late sought her more and more when he was in a light-hearted state of mind, and would tell her such absurd adventures he had passed through, such amusing made-up stories, they would both laugh irresistibly. Sometimes even when he talked seriously it had been enough to watch the motion of his lips, the look of his eyes ; she had smiled with delight. It was in Kitty's nature always to do something ; not to be content to sit still and acquiesce with folded hands. When Glen had confessed to her that he was unhappy, it had seemed to her a very natural and inevitable thing that she should marry him and make him happy.

However, her mother had given her an inkling of how wildly out of reason her impulse was. Her mood, at present, was timid and irresolute. It was a cause for gratitude that Glen knew nothing about her talk with her mother. The important thing was so to behave that he should never know anything about it. Once or twice a secret sense that he liked her — liked her quite as much as she liked him — had passed through her like an electric thrill. But what she felt to-day was that she wished not to see him, — at least not to see him and be obliged to meet his glances, his questionings. For he would question her if he saw the least change in her ; of that she was certain. He noticed everything — her hair, her eyes, her feet, her frock ; he laughed at everything he could,

but behind that laugh was an interest in the slightest thing that belonged to her. Once she had scratched her hand, and it bled slightly; she herself had hardly noticed it,— she was always scratching her hand. But the moment she passed through the hall where he was sitting, as if he had eyes in the back of his head, he cried out,—

“Kitty, how did you hurt your hand? Come here.”

So now, if he were to be within reach of her he would say, “Kitty, what has come over you?” and it would all have to be told. His very glance drew from her all he wished to know.

She had suffered acutely; but although when one is eighteen one suffers acutely, one experiences promptly the reaction from suffering. Dreams, thoughts, aspirations, prayers, each developed out of a single sensation, and, bringing its own interpretation of her need, had lifted up her soul into a sort of exaltation. Her mother’s smile was like an inspiration. It was only now, when she had separated herself for an hour from her mother, that she comprehended how she could miss her,— feel the need of her. Glen suddenly began to seem afar off. Most probably it was as the marchesa had said,— she had shocked, even bored him. What did it matter? What did anything matter? The depth and wonder of the blue of the sky set off by the soft fleecy clouds driven like a flock of sheep before the wind, the swift motion, the rush of the delicious air, the easy and dexterous

way Teddy managed his horses, all helped to give her a new equilibrium of feeling. Even the recollection that she had, as it were, asserted her strength and independence was a stimulus. It was no longer of herself or her own wishes of which she was thinking, but of the beauty of the fields of corn hanging out their pennants in the sunlight; of the reaping-machine, with sickles revolving like the sails of a windmill as they cut the wheat on the far hillside, flashing in the sun as they tossed the golden swaths, — of the way the patient cattle sought the shade. All these glimpses into the real uses and activities of every-day life helped her to forget her excitement of feeling. She grew interested. It was no longer in her power to keep silence. She remembered the fields of wheat far away in Tuscany, — divided and subdivided, — and the gleam of the scarlet poppies through the little forest of green blades of grain. She found Teddy a most interested listener as she described the lives her dear old peasants led. They accomplished so much with so little that she was amazed at the profusion, the amplitude, of everything here. She told him about the father and mother of their old servant Beppo, who lived on a rocky terrace, and how they carried up earth in hottes to fill all the interstices, and how they planted, in the drolliest little out-of-the-way places, olives, figs, mulberries, and the wheat out of which, in winter, the women plaited beautiful straw.

Teddy thought nothing had ever been so beau-

tiful and vivid as Kitty's face while she talked. A young fellow's love is not of the eloquent sort ; but in telling her that he should like to show her some of the great fields of grain in the West and Southwest, he seemed to find a way of expressing some of the rapture with which she filled him.

The four-in-hand, after finally passing Teddy's single pair, had beaten in the race by twenty minutes. When Kitty came in sight of the old colonial place where they were to picnic, Glen Rennie was standing with her mother on the top of the steps, waiting. Kitty looked at Glen one moment, and knew that all her thoughts and feelings during the drive were nothing — nothing at all. The smile he gave her penetrated and illumined her whole consciousness ; yet, with a painful sensation, she looked away and met her mother's anxious glance. As Constance saw her child approach, she involuntarily reached out her arm. Teddy drew up the horses sharply at the same moment, and, almost without touching any support, Kitty flew down from her perch. She experienced such comfort in her mother's smile and in her embrace, she appeared to forget even that Glen stood looking at her and waiting to speak to her. The little separation seemed to have set everything to rights between Kitty and the marchesa. The latter permitted, rather than accepted, the caresses so ardently lavished, laughing at the sort of fury with which they were bestowed ; and when Kitty drew her away, trying with all the little arts she knew to

make her mother look at her and speak to her, Constance's heart swelled with pride and pleasure. She, too, forgot Glen Rennie, who, with a shrug at his own insignificance, offered his arm to Mrs. Edward Darrow, who asked him to show her the house. Millicent Darrow was marshaling the party; she had prepared a lecture on the historical aspects of the old estate called Governor's Seat. The dwelling was of stone, with a massive penthouse in front, and the ample doorway opened into a wide hall and great square rooms with wonderful fire-places. But the house itself was rather musty with its antiquity. The garden, with its box-bordered paths, and the long avenues of trees were better worth enjoying on this summer's day.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SECRET OF THE WATERFALL.

"WHEN we have licked the platters quite clean," Glen said in Kitty's ear, as they were finishing luncheon, "I am going to take you down to the waterfall."

Kitty blushed and dropped her eyes.

"I think I promised to go with Teddy," she said under her breath.

Glen making no answer, Kitty presently lifted her glance. As her eyes met Glen's, her heart seemed to bound into her throat and almost choked her.

"You promised to go with Teddy?" he said.

"Yes."

Glen drew back and presently had the satisfaction of seeing Kitty walk down the old garden with the good-looking youngster. They were followed by the marchesa and John Haliburton.

"Will you join the procession?" Glen said solemnly, advancing toward Agatha Darrow.

Kitty had begged her mother to come with her, and the marchesa herself had suggested to Haliburton that he should join them. He was amazed at the change in Constance. He had felt sure

earlier in the day that something was troubling her very much. At this moment, as they followed Kitty and Teddy, the marchesa seemed dazzlingly happy. He could not keep his gaze from her; the light of her eyes passed through him; the idea of her beauty possessed him.

"I see," she said, meeting his smile, "that you perceive my barometer has gone up."

"Something was troubling you this morning. I wished so much that I could help you."

"You always do help me, I think."

"I would die for you, Constance." Haliburton said this bending towards her, as he stood waiting for her to go through the wicket which separated the garden from a sort of glen that led to the ravine. His low voice just reached her ear; nothing in his manner betrayed him to the two who went before or the two who followed; not even Constance was troubled by the overmastering fervor of his speech. What she did experience was a sure sense of his goodness and of his strength.

"This was not a real trouble. It has passed, or almost passed," she answered. "I was startled. I had somehow to get my view of things into a new focus."

Haliburton had a sudden dreadful thought. He was not an imaginative man, but at this fancy he grew pale.

"You are not about to promise to marry again?" he exclaimed, with such evident perturbation that she laughed.

"Why, my dear friend," she rejoined playfully, "were you not urging something of the sort a little while ago?"

"You do not seem to think that a man sometimes feels it his duty" —

She broke off his speech with a little gesture.

"That sort of thing is quite over for me," she said, and, as their eyes met again, she saw that Haliburton's pallor was changed to a crimson flush. "My trouble was something quite different," she went on. "You must see that I am a woman of just one idea. That idea is eighteen years old."

"It is Kitty."

"Nothing else." She began talking about Kitty, telling stories of her babyhood, her early childhood. Once when the little girl was in her third year, Constance had left her at home, and set out with her husband for a week's visit. She was recalled at the end of the second day; Kitty had not eaten or slept since she went away; she was devoured by a fever of fretfulness and restlessness. Constance had suffered almost as much as she, and said then that she and Kitty must never be parted.

She went on eagerly, and it seemed to Haliburton, as he listened, that Constance was laying bare the secret of her heart; that she was confessing she had found only in her child — at least in any satisfying measure — what she had longed for all her life. In describing her happiness in Kitty, she made it clear to his perceptions that after missing the expected happiness of her married life, — after

accepting the fact that actual happiness is not a state to be realized by mortals, — she had found in motherhood not only the old magical exhilaration of her girlish dreams, but her first genuine satisfying experience. Haliburton had told himself before now that Constance's married life had not been all it might have been, but then it was like a lover to be jealous of the two men whose name she had borne. Her tone, in speaking of Bertini, was always of a calm and meditative sweetness. As to Philip Amory, he was, when he died, a mere clever boy, full of artistic promise. Neither had developed in Constance the passion of her life. That had come with Kitty. As her face lighted up while making these confidences, Haliburton was reminded of the many pictures which the old masters — endlessly idealizing and refining upon the idea of maternal rapture — painted of the mother bending over the Holy Child, with an ecstatic sense of joy in her wonder and of wonder in her joy, as she adores the heavenly gift bestowed upon her — a mere mortal woman. The unspeakable bliss of intimate possession, the worship of the flesh, the thrill of the touch of those little limbs and feet and hands and cheeks, the beauty of the little dear face, and, along with this yearning tenderness, the sense of self-dedication.

Yet Haliburton said to himself that although Kitty had been to Constance a divine boon, still she had been only a compensation. Constance had not only not been herself really in love, but no man had

loved her as he, Haliburton, could love her. Yet while he said this to himself, he knew that as long as Constance had Kitty she would need, or think she needed, nothing else. But now, looking at Kitty walking on into youth's fairyland, led by Teddy, it seemed to him quite unlikely that Constance would always have Kitty.

A long avenue of trees began beyond the garden, ending where a descent of stone steps led down into the ravine, where the branches and foliage made a mass of shade which only here and there afforded an opening for a shaft of sunlight to pierce through, — every flash of sunlight on the moss and creepers looking like a yellow butterfly.

At the end of the steps began a toilsome path along the side of a brook, whose bed was strewn with boulders green with moss, and offering a hold for ferns and creepers to fasten themselves and develop under the green twilight into marvelous delicacy. Kitty, leading the way, flitted from stone to stone with the sure-footed instinct of a wild creature. The jungle grew more and more dense on the right hand ; on the left the clear amber brook flowed within narrowing banks with little lisps and gurgles and often a little song of its own.

Every other moment Kitty looked back over her shoulder and laughed. The broken lights, the intense shadows, the frail white flowers hanging out of tender, swaying arabesques of green, the feeling that she was going towards something more and more

mysterious, she knew not what, kept her excited. Teddy was just behind her. What he saw was, not the brook, or the ferns and creepers, but the vivid fire of her eyes, the vermilion of her lips.

"Kitty!" called Constance, "don't you think we have gone far enough?"

"But we started to go to the waterfall, mamma. It cannot be very far ahead. I hear it."

"The rocks are so slippery, I fear you will come to grief."

"Oh, no, *mamma mia*, I shall not fall."

"I shall fall," said Constance. "I am not a chamois. I will sit down and wait here." She suited her action to the word.

Glen and Agatha, who were engaged in a lively conversation, came up presently, and found the marchesa and Haliburton, the former established on top of a rock, around whose base the brook made a sharp bend, and Haliburton leaning against the side of it. Constance explained that she had given out, and that she trusted to them to look after Kitty.

Glen listened to her charge with apparent indifference, and the two went on; they were discussing the difference between the impressionist and the *plein air* schools. Constance's eyes followed Glen, and Haliburton noticed that she kept her glance on him as long as he was in sight.

"Glen looks young and handsome in that brown velveteen," he said.

"Decidedly too young and handsome," said Con-

stance discontentedly. "When a man is thirty-eight or thirty-nine years old he ought to show it." However, as she spoke she laughed.

"It is forty-five that begins to tell on men, and women, too," said Haliburton. "Until then they may be young."

"I am not forty-five, but I am not young."

"You are eternally young, Constance."

As Haliburton said this, he was disconcerted to see a face peering round the rock at him.

"Have n't you gone to the waterfall?" inquired Sue Darrow, emerging from a thicket of elders and bracken. She was alone. She said she too had wished to behold the cascade, and finding no one to join her had been following in their steps. She had lost her way. She had stepped knee-deep in the pool. She had quite spoiled her fresh piqué frock, but she was bent on gaining the goal of her enterprise. She was not easily beaten, she declared with a laugh. Poor Sue!

Haliburton turned to Constance on the instant.

"Marchesa," he said, "you will not mind sitting here alone a little while. I should like to go on with Miss Darrow and help her to find the waterfall, if you do not object."

"Oh, certainly, go," said Constance. "I shall be very comfortable here. I like it of all things."

Constance bestowed a glance and a thought on the two as they took their course along the edge of the brook before they were swallowed up in the dense greenery. She liked Haliburton for having

thought of going on with Sue ; there was nothing about Haliburton she did not like. He was one of those satisfactory people who become, almost before we know it, intimate, dear, necessary, — above all, necessary. Her mind reverted to the problem of the morning. If Haliburton had stayed here quietly with her it was possible — oh, no, it was impossible ! She could not have given Kitty's secret away to the enemy, as it were ; for in so many things Haliburton and Glen were one, and Glen was the enemy.

Seated here, she had the feeling, the luxurious leisure, of absolute solitude. What was that bird note ? A thrush ? No, the bird that glided out of the thicket on noiseless wing, and dipped into the stream as it flew over, had a sad-colored plumage. As if by contrast, a blue-jay flashed across the opening between water and sky. It was almost startling to realize that there must be many living creatures in this solitude. She could detect now, over and beyond the rustle of the trees, the shallow wash and murmur of the stream, the monotonous sound of the waterfall. She wondered dreamily if Kitty were enjoying her talk and walk with Teddy.

“Henceforth my rôle is to be that of chaperon,” Constance said to herself. She smiled at the thought of her having shirked it at this moment. She had pitied ballroom chaperons, but what a formidable task to chaperon a girl who uses her gazelle-like feet, not on a waxed floor, but on damp, slippery stones.

But who, Constance said to herself, would have supposed that chaperonage would be needed in this quiet coterie of cousins? It suddenly occurred to her mind that she had married one of these cousins; that Philip Amory had offered himself to her — if the phrase were not too formal — on a picnic, when they were overtaken by a thunder-storm and had to seek shelter in a barn full of hay. She smiled a little and lost herself in thought, as, bending forward, she looked at some wonderfully burnished gold buttercups which were blossoming out of the cleft of the rock.

She was roused from her reverie by the sound of voices. The party was returning. She stood up, eagerly awaiting the first glimpse of Kitty. It was strange what a crashing of twigs and trampling of the underbrush seemed to be necessary for the progress. What Constance was looking for was the white scarf on Kitty's hat when the girl came flying back, as she had gone, at an Atalanta-like pace. On the contrary, Glen first appeared, but only as a pioneer; he seemed to be clearing away the vines which tangled about the path, as if making a road for — what? Was that Teddy Darrow following with something in his arms? Something? It was Kitty's helpless figure. Kitty, hatless, her hair falling about her. Oh, what had happened?

"Do not worry, marchesa," Glen shouted, the moment he came in sight of Constance. "Kitty tumbled into the water and got wet."

Nevertheless, there seemed to be something beyond what this explanation accounted for. Teddy's pale face seemed full of horror; he drew deep breaths pantingly. As he approached Constance, who stood suffering and dreading everything, it seemed as if his strength had given way.

"Oh, marchesa," he faltered. "I'm afraid I've killed her."

This is what had happened. Kitty had gone on with flying feet, her spirits rising with a joyous sense of discovery, as every moment the dash of the waterfall sounded nearer and nearer. Ah, there it was!

"Do you see it?" she cried to Teddy. "It is like a white veil, — it swings to and fro."

Teddy had the lungs and breath of a trained athlete; he had been able to keep up with her, — that is, to maintain just the right distance behind her, — but what she did with the poise of a bird, he did solidly and stolidly. He could not admire her enough; nothing so pretty as her bent, flying figure, he thought, had ever before been seen, while anything so provocative as her occasional challenging glance over her shoulder, and her ripple of childish laughter, he had never before felt.

The fall was nothing wonderful in itself; nothing but the leap of a small brook over the low rampart of rocks, and now the heats of summer had reduced it to a thread; it fell gracefully, changing to mist on its way, so that it added little

to the pool below, which came from a spring beneath the rocks. But the delicate feathers of the ferns on every side and the occasional little waxen blossoms of the pipsissewa made an exquisite setting. Kitty found free expression of her delight in unstinted measure, looking up into the face of the young man who had now gained her side.

"I felt like the wind as I rushed on," said Kitty. "It was so exciting. I knew if I once stopped to take breath, I should lose my balance, and if I had looked at the stones I should not have known how to pick my way."

This beautiful flushed face raised to his, the soft, brilliant eyes, the parted lips, were too near, too alluring. Then, besides, Teddy had already a whole world of passion for the girl pent up in his heart, and knew not how to utter it. Yet somehow he must reach her — if not by words, by some swift, sure arrow of meaning that should fix itself in her heart. Accordingly he bent and almost touched his lips to hers. Not quite. If his action was like the flash of a bird to its prey, hers was the dart of the wild creature bent on self-preservation. They had been standing together at the foot of the cascade. With an agile bound she cleared the intervening space and alighted on an uneven platform of rock which made a sort of island in the green pool, raised here and there above the water, but slippery with some fine, wet, mossy growth.

"Why, Kitty," said Teddy, "do not be afraid of me."

"I am not afraid of you," retorted Kitty, "but please not to come so near me again."

"But, Kitty," Teddy expostulated, "I'm awfully in love with you. I want to tell you that." Picking his way carefully on the slippery stones, he was approaching her.

"Do not come near me," she called warningly.

"Oh, Kitty, do not be so cruel," said Teddy. "I only want to speak to you one moment. I know I'm young, but one grows older, and by a year from now I shall be through college. Why could n't we be engaged?"

"Engaged?" repeated Kitty incredulously. The word reaching her ear with such startling unexpectedness, she turned and gazed at the young fellow blankly. "I engaged to you!"

Teddy did not quite understand the precise degree of surprise and horror behind the words. By this time he had reached her side, his arms were extended to clasp her, when, with a sharp cry she sprang away from him, slipped on the stones and fell into the pool.

"I told you not to come near me," she said, looking up from the water at him as he reached frantically towards her. "Go away. I will not let you touch me. I will drown first." She clutched at the stones, tried to regain a footing; then, with a gurgling half cry, succumbed and fainted dead away. She had sprained her ankle. To lift her in his arms, drag her out of the water and prepare to carry her back, was a moment's work. He

had not gone ten paces before he met Glendenning Rennie and Agatha Darrow.

Kitty had recovered her consciousness by the time Teddy had deposited her at her mother's feet, and, when she recognized her mother's familiar touch rubbing her chilly hands, she opened her dark eyes and smiled faintly.

"Oh, Kitty! oh, Kitty!" faltered Constance.

"I think I have sprained my ankle," Kitty replied.

Constance, who, until this moment had felt almost paralyzed with dread as she looked at Kitty's pale face, her closed eyes, her pallid, parted lips, had a sudden rebound into energy. She unbuttoned the little shoe, turned down the stocking and disclosed the ankle rapidly swelling, and in one place already purple.

"Oh, where is Sue? Sue will know what to do," said Gatty.

We must go back again for one moment and find Sue, for she and Haliburton had contrived to lose themselves. That is, Sue, always omniscient, had told him the way to the cascade was to the right, which was the case, — only it happened to be the longer way, so that by the time they arrived at the little waterfall no one was there. The pool of dark green water, the rocks, the ferns, the starry white-blossoms, had it all to themselves.

"Don't they seem to you to possess some secret?" Sue asked, her mood rising to poetry.

"Don't they seem to be brooding over some beautiful, unutterable idea that they will not impart to us?"

Haliburton acquiesced, and indeed, considering what had been happening in the spot within the last twenty minutes, Sue's surmise was not so very far wrong.

"I suppose we had better go back," he now observed, looking at his watch.

"Yes, just as things are at their pleasantest they always have to be over," said Sue. She looked at him. "Don't you think so?"

"I never mean to generalize from my own social experience, — it's so slight," he returned.

"Let us sit down and stay five minutes here," pleaded Sue, "now that we have come so far."

"Oh, certainly," said Haliburton. "Here is a rock, — but there, how will that tree-trunk do?"

Miss Darrow seated herself, generously extending her ample skirts in order that Haliburton might have some covering between his tweeds and the rough bark. It needed just this touch of thoughtfulness, this superabundant goodness which went to Haliburton's conscience, to give him a feeling of remorse.

He sat down beside her, a desperate intention coming into his mind.

"Sue," he said, "I have known you a good many years, but I do not believe that I have ever uttered one word of the real cordial appreciation and admiration I have for you."

Sue, with a face where white chased red, and red white, gasped, —

“Oh, John!”

“I feel as if I were unfriendly, disloyal, almost a traitor, that I have never told you something which has actually shaped my life and made me just the morose old fellow I am.”

“Morose you never are,” said Sue, “and only just old enough to be interesting.”

“I have never told any one what I am going to tell you, — I never gave even my mother a hint of it.”

It was clear from her face that her personal consciousness was at the moment nothing more than thrilling, palpitating expectation. He went on, closing his eyes as he spoke, like a timid marksman who dreads the explosion of his missile.

“I have been in love with one woman for twelve years,” he now said, and then waited.

Sue sighed luxuriously. . She also waited.

“Of course you can guess who it is,” he said in a low voice.

“I should prefer that you told me.”

“It was the summer I went to Italy to visit Glen when he was consul there. She was already a widow for the second time, — her little girl was six years old.”

Sue gave a start. She seemed to be rubbing her eyes.

“Do you mean Conny Amory?” she asked.

“Whom else?”

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There was just one moment's silence, but sixty seconds can be measured heavily. A little contraction had passed over Sue's face; like a frost it had nipped the bloom.

"I have never told her," Haliburton said after the pause had grown a little irksome to him.

"Why not?" Sue's voice was just a trifle roughened.

"Glen has always been in love with her. She has no wish to marry anybody. Her one thought is of Kitty."

"I think you ought to tell her," Sue now said. "A child makes a difference, but a child is not everything to a woman after all. And she would have the chance to make you happy."

Haliburton gave a short laugh.

"I don't think she cares much about that chance," he said. "In fact, I feel like a presumptuous fool in having mentioned the subject at all. Only" —

"Only we are friends, good friends," said Sue, reaching out her large, warm, supple hand, "and friends ought to understand each other. In fact, I needed to know this in order to understand a great deal that has often puzzled me about you."

He had taken the hand, and pressed it. He thought of kissing it, but abstained, that sort of demonstration not being a habit of his.

"You'll keep my secret?" he said.

"Oh yes, — until you tell it."

"I'm not likely to do that."

"The logic of events, — the logic of events," said Sue, laughing. "I said just now that you ought to tell her if only to give her a chance to make you happy ; but there is another reason still. She ought to have the chance of being made happy by you."

"Oh, Sue," said Haliburton, "you are a flatterer."

She sprang up, saying it was time to go back.

They came within hearing just as Agatha was calling, "Where is Sue? Where is Sue?"

Kitty was sitting, leaning against her mother, deadly pale, with a firmly set mouth and an expression of concentrated endurance in her eyes. At the sight of something to do, Sue's whole nature felt a glad rebound from the idea of her own suffering, her own resentment, into her old, sweet habit of loving all the world. She went up to the group, said to Constance, "Oh, this will be over in a couple of days," took the slim ankle between her hands, and began to chafe it.

"Now you men tear up your handkerchiefs," she said, "and I will bandage it. And, Teddy, have two of the grooms bring the most comfortable chair they can find in the house."

CHAPTER XV.

ANOTHER WAY OF LOVE.

CARLYLE says somewhere that no man knows what breaking his nose will do to the general injury.

The events of the picnic made a difference in the life of the neighborhood; and as slight causes often have to bear the responsibility of large results, the spraining of Kitty's ankle was the convenient fulcrum on which everything rested.

To Kitty, that whole day seemed like a painful, dimly remembered dream. An earthquake had happened in her little world of feeling, and nothing could ever be pleasant to her again, so she felt, as it had before; she turned from the dull, sombre haze of possibilities and probabilities, and was thankful almost for the suffering that kept her a prisoner.

Of course Constance had heard the whole story of what had happened at the cascade both from Kitty and from Teddy. The latter's passionate impulse had been like a too quickly lighted fire which had blazed up and then gone out. He asked forgiveness humbly. He longed to do something to atone for it. But he told Constance that he should never care for anybody except Kitty, and that, while he

did not venture to ask to be engaged to her now, he should have no other thought in his heart, and no other intention in every effort of his intellect and will except to become worthy of her.

Constance could only tell him that he had alarmed and displeased the young girl; that the only way in which he could show his regard and his contrition was to be absolutely silent on the subject of his feelings towards Kitty, past, present, and future. He had spoken of rushing off at once. She begged him to do nothing to excite remark. In a little while his mother would be going to the seaside, and, meanwhile, he and Kitty would probably not be thrown together.

For more than a fortnight after the picnic Glen-denning Rennie seemed wholly to have dropped out of the coterie. Constance was a little puzzled by his disappearance. He had not once come over to inquire about Kitty. Even Teddy Darrow sent flowers and fruit every day, but no sign of interest was displayed by Glen. Kitty never spoke his name. She was apparently reconciled to his absence, even if she did not understand it. Constance believed that Kitty had been startled by the crude fervor with which Teddy had put the idea of love before her, that she now shrank away from it. Never in her life had the girl been so docile and so pliant as now.

Constance had asked Haliburton about Glen, making some solicitude concerning his health the pretext of her inquiry. Haliburton explained that

Glen had suddenly set to work as if bent upon making up all arrears. Besides his usual occupations, he had lately taken two departments on the paper to which he was nominally attached, while the regular editors were off on a summer holiday. He was also engaged in looking up the pedigree of a putative Franz Hals offered for sale to a millionaire who wished to be sure of its authenticity. Haliburton confessed to Constance that although he had hitherto regretted that Glen made no attempt to spend his powers on effective work, it gave him nowadays a feeling of culpability to see the foolish fellow setting off early in the morning, and returning gaunt and pale at sunset. Haliburton's own holidays had come, and to sit by and see Glen wearing himself out really hurt him.

He did not tell Constance that he sometimes suspected the artificial stimulus of some feverish thought behind Glen's assiduity. After venturing a few exhortations for more prudence and moderation, Haliburton decided to wait and see what was behind this new development of energy. The strange thing was that Glen would go nowhere. Each evening he would make a suggestion: "Glen, suppose we go over to Richard Amory's."

"Go yourself, John," the reply would be. "I'm comfortable for the first time to-day, and shan't stir."

"Not to see about poor little Kitty's ankle?"

"Nobody dies of a sprained ankle."

"Not even to see the marchesa?"

"No, no, no,—not even to see the signora marchesa."

"To the Darrows! You and Agatha have so much to talk about."

"I tell you, John, I don't wish to see any woman."

"Never again?"

"Never again. Not a woman, not one single woman in the world."

"Has anything happened?"

"Nothing whatever has happened. I have simply forsworn the sex. If Adam in paradise had wisely done the same, and put up a board at the entrance with 'No women wanted' chalked on it, man's history would have been a simpler affair. Instead of that he went mooning round that Tree of Knowledge till the Lord changed his original intention, and said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make a helpmeet for him.' That was the beginning of all the mischief in the world. Otherwise, mankind would have been propagated like trees and grown up tall and symmetrical."

"That has been said before, and the man who said it made it the preamble to marriage with an estimable woman who gave him ten children."

"He submitted to what he considered the inexorable results of Adam's foolishness. I do not submit. I have no call to marry any estimable woman and beget ten children. A man must have some effrontery to perpetuate himself to that exaggerated degree. To say nothing of foisting upon

the world ten noses like his own, ten pairs of feet and hands, ten mouths to eat, drink, grin, and whimper, but also to have the same number of reproductions of his sins, vices, idiosyncrasies ! No ; if I were given that chance in paradise, my motto would be ‘No women, — no women, — no women.’ ”

Haliburton naturally imputed this sudden change of wind to some spasm of angry consciousness where Constance Bertini was concerned. He hated to see Glen working too hard, yet at the same time it was a pleasure to find out that there was the stuff in him to make him work too hard, even if it were a mere escape from his impatience with life, his futile regrets. Whether Glen understood his own state of mind any more clearly is an open question. He was, nevertheless, doing a good deal of thinking about himself in these days. He confessed that he had got nothing out of life that he wanted, and he was trying to set his wits to work to decide why he had got nothing out of life that he wanted. But then, what had he wanted ? Not money, — for it had always been his creed that it was beyond the power of money to give any single pleasure above the roof that shelters, the fire that warms, and the table that feeds. He hated accumulations for himself, and after he had exhausted his first curiosity and pleasure in any object of art which had come into his possession, he had passed it along to delight some one else. Had he been rich, he might have experimented with money to show his powers of ori-

ginality. His inheritance had been lost in a commercial crisis when he was sixteen. All that was left was about five hundred a year, and this he could easily double or treble by the exercise of one or the other of his powers. John Haliburton had spoiled him, loving him, offering everything, dividing everything. Glen had accepted everything, and his sense of owing everything to John was delightful. That debt to John was the one unspoiled thing which belonged to him.

No, he had never craved wealth, but he had wished to marry Constance Bertini. By what ignobleness, by what blunder in his courtship, had he missed winning her? For she had liked him in the old days; she liked him even now in spite of her brief moment of disdain when he had tried to plant the past in the present like a palpable ghost. Still, he had not made love to her this summer. Nothing ever quite begins over again, and after a man has accepted a refusal for twelve years he can hardly come back to his wooing gracefully unless he is a successful egoist. Glen decided that he was an unsuccessful egoist. He had been in love with Constance and had written his "Love Unfulfilled," and, in spite of the tragic pathos of "Love Unfulfilled," he was now ready to grant that his love for Constance was not a love to be fulfilled. He had not seen his little volume for ten years, — his *poésie du diable*, as the French call youthful poetry. He hunted up a copy in a second-hand book-shop. He read over the sonnets

one by one, and was surprised to find how slight they were, how little sincere. In spite of the idea of the series and the general trend of its meaning, the characters he described were neither his own nor Constance's. Yet, in default of high veracity, the early performance still possessed cleverness; it was almost too clever. For if here and there a verse rose to a high level in a burst of passionate self-consciousness, most of the poems — felicitous enough conceptions of a phase of feeling perhaps pathetic, perhaps ironical, often enough profound — sank to an anti-climax more than once a little flippant. "I had read Heine too much," Glen said, recognizing the outcome of a perverse, self-scrutinizing mind that recoils fastidiously from exposure of its deepest feeling.

Concerning his relations to Kitty, Glen had no introspection. He was actually vexed with Kitty. Looking at him with such enchanting sweetness, "on my soul, kissing me," listening to him, charmed while he talked by the yard, then running off with a dull, heavy boy. If Glen had set to work to study himself, he might have discovered a sickening throb of pain behind that stiffening into resistance and revolt against the idea of Kitty's being appropriated by that ridiculous young fellow. But why not? Measuring his own corn by Teddy's bushel, it was the scantiest possible yield.

What this episode of Kitty — if episode it could be called — meant to Glen, was that it supplied a touchstone which dispelled illusions, banished

glamour; in the twinkling of an eye changed the indolent dreamer into the indefatigable worker. It was as if he had hitherto cultivated a sense of youthfulness, — trying to find zest, fillip, charm, in everything pleasurable. He had been half asleep, and now suddenly awakening to the fact that instead of its being early morning with him it was past noon, he had determined to do something, no matter what, before the night came.

Still, although nowadays he put at least three ordinary days' work into one, he was not wholly absorbed. Even if he pretended to be dead to what was going on outside, he still had a naïve curiosity to gratify.

Late one afternoon Haliburton was setting out for a dinner-party given some ten miles away; Glen had been invited, but had declined, as he had of late declined everything. Now when he saw John descending in careful array, he followed, supplied a carnation for his buttonhole, and inquired who else was going.

"The marchesa and Richard Amory. Ambury Darrow and his wife and daughters were asked, but of course they have gone away. I know of nobody else in this neighborhood."

"Not Kitty?" inquired Glen.

"Not Kitty. The marchesa was saying that Kitty's time for grand dinner-parties had not come yet." Haliburton put his hand on Glen's shoulder.

"I hate to go off without you," he added.

"I have renounced society."

"It was all so pleasant early in the summer," Haliburton said; "your turning hermit has spoiled everything."

"I'm no hermit. You and I get on famously, old fellow."

Glen ate his dinner alone, then smoked his cigar in the garden. The fragrance of the flowers rose sweet and pungent. It seemed to unlock ideas and feelings he had of late denied himself. He began to be stirred by the old restlessness that nowadays he put down with an iron hand. He said it was the heavy, sultry air. He left the garden and walked to the brow of the hill. A storm was threatening; the sunset was crimson, and, above, ragged, leaden clouds took veinings of the same sanguinary hue. All the portents of the west were dark, but in the east a large, motionless cloud took on tints of pale rose, and hung there without changing or moving.

It was evident that Glen was waiting for darkness. He glanced from time to time at the luminous cloud in the east, as if impatient. Suddenly it faded, and the moment its light went out night advanced apace. Everything grew weird, phantasmal, threatening, as the wind freshened. Even the stars, which here and there shone out between the masses of hurrying clouds, looked strange.

He seemed to have some clear intention, for now, throwing away the end of his cigar, he buttoned his coat, plunged down the bank, and entered the woods, taking an oblique direction, and making

his way, indifferent to paths, until he reached the edge of Waldstein. He had taken the longest way round, if Waldstein was his object. It might have been suspected that he was invading the place, not as a guest, rather as a spy. He skirted the woods, did not cross the lawn, but crept from one thicket to another of the shrubberies, finally arriving at the end of the terrace. He need not have feared that he was in danger of being observed. The night was dark, yet eyes can pierce darkness. The point was that no eyes were watching at Waldstein. The man and the dog had gone with the carriage which took Richard Amory and his sister to the dinner-party. The cook and the parlor-maid were busy in the kitchen. From the drawing-room shone lights. Somebody, perhaps, was there. After a pause under the laburnums, — a pause which gave time for a reconnaissance, — he advanced a few steps, jumped over the balustrade of the veranda, and looked in at one of the open French windows. The room had one occupant. Kitty was sitting before a table, and, bending forward, seemed to be giving all her attention and all her powers to some pursuit. What was she doing? Transferring little bits of paper from one pile to another? They were cards. She was telling her fortune. He almost laughed outright at the absurdity of the thing. What a child she was, appealing to some fate over and above her, as if she were at its mercy, while she not only made her own fate, but settled that of half a dozen other persons.

It had been no part of Glen's scheme to enter; he had no intention of again laying himself open to rebuff. He had simply felt sharply inquisitive, had come to spy upon Kitty, to find out what she was doing. It might have been years since he saw her last, so absolutely since that day of the picnic had he acquiesced in the idea that she and Teddy were lovers, and gone on accepting the pictures of their felicity which his imagination imposed. He had never forgotten the exquisite blush with which Kitty had told him that day she was going to the waterfall with Teddy. He had seen her go down the sunny slope of the old garden with Teddy. Then he had seen Teddy bearing her fainting to her mother. Everybody had stood back to give way to Teddy, as if Kitty belonged to him by right.

What Glen had come for to-night was to end any possible uncertainty. If, while he watched, Teddy had rung at the door-bell, Glen would have turned his back and gone away.

There was no Teddy. There was only Kitty. While Glen looked at her she yawned, glanced at the clock, then settled herself again at the cards. She was expecting no lover; she was simply waiting for nine o'clock to come that she might go to bed.

He found the shortest road to her,— he flung back the shutters and walked in through the window. At the sound she started up, looked round, took one step forward, then stood still. He could not have told why he did not speak. He did not understand what the message was in her whole

look. Some feeling exquisite, but tragic, laid hold of him. He took her hand and stood for a moment looking into her face trying to command himself. Then, releasing his clasp upon her fluttering fingers, he passed his hand over his lips. It was as if he tried to speak and could not. Finally achieving some self-mastery he said in an easy, off-hand way, —

“Telling your fortune, Kitty?”

“No,” she replied simply. “I am playing solitaire.”

“Go on with your game,” he said. “I will watch you. I used to play it by the hour when I was a boy getting over my fits of illness.”

She reseated herself promptly before the table as if it were a relief to be told what to do. He stood beside her leaning over her, with one hand on the back of the chair. His nearness, the feeling she had that he had been almost incapable of speech, the sight of his trembling lips awed and frightened her. She tried to school herself to remember all that her mother had said, all that she had meant to do and to say when she should meet cousin Glen again. But all the while her pulses throbbed faster and faster, — tears came nearer and nearer her eyes. For a few minutes she went on shifting cards from pack to pack, making the regular sequence mechanically, then growing more and more confused and bewildered. At first when she seemed to trip he laughed, put out his hand and corrected her mistake. It was

this, perhaps, that helped to blur her vision. Conscious of her weakness a sob rose in her throat. At the sound he put his hand under her chin and made her look up. Her upper lip had a lift in its curve which went to his heart; the expression of her eyes puzzled and fascinated him.

"Kitty," he said in a tone of intense reproach, "you deserted me."

She did not try to answer. Her dismay was too great.

"You deserted me for Teddy," he said again, with a note of deep feeling in his voice.

"No," she whispered. "No."

"You went off with him on the day of the picnic."

"Yes, I went with him," she murmured under her breath.

He burned to interrogate her; he wished to move her; he would not have minded if he made her angry, if he made her weep. He was ready to pour out hot reproaches, — bitter accusations of he knew not what. Somehow it seemed as if he must free his heart of the burden he had been carrying of late; somehow, too, he needed to reach her heart and find out its secret. But that beautiful young face touched him into remorseful tenderness. Even while he felt that he must pluck this flower of opportunity, end the dull torment of the past weeks, he still knew that he had no right to meddle with her destiny.

"I don't ask you what you feel for Teddy," he

now proceeded. "Of course he is worth fifty such fellows as I am. I grant you that. Nevertheless, Kitty, you and I had become real friends. At least I thought so."

He paused and waited for her to speak. A little sigh broke from her.

"Were we not friends?" he demanded.

"I thought so," she said shyly.

"Why that very morning," he went on, "I had waked up thinking that, after all, life was a delightful thing since Kitty was in it. Then you flung me over for that boy."

Kitty, in the meshes of her own feelings, in doubt what to say, gazed at him mute, helpless.

He had sat down opposite her at the little table. Reaching across he took the little hand that fluttered idly among the cards and pressed it between his two palms.

"Of course you don't care a straw for me," he said. "Why should you? I am twice your age. Teddy Darrow is just the one for you, — young, rich, clever, bound to succeed. He has all that I have not. But, Kitty, it makes me simply furious." He pulled himself up, and released her hand. "Tell me to go away," he said brokenly. "I had no intention of saying this, — of seeing you at all. Why is not Teddy here?"

"He never comes," she said proudly. "I told him he must never come near me again."

They looked at each other across the table for a moment in silence.

"You told Teddy never to come near you again?"

"Yes."

"He wanted to — he asked you" — He began these incoherent questions with a look inquisitive and commanding, then broke off, put his elbows on the table and dropped his face in his hands. Something inexorable seemed to hold him in its clutch.

"Tell me to go away," he said. "Tell me not to come and see you. I am the one to be sent about my business." There was a moment's silence; then he lifted his head, leaned back in his chair, and looked at her with self-possession.

"Shall I go away?" he asked.

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

"I am not sure at all. You are young and beautiful. Heaven only knows what grand destiny may be coming to you. But let us talk no more about it. We can only live in this one moment. So let us talk no more about it."

She was looking at him like a wondering, happy child.

He began to talk amusingly about his work of late. He described his editorial experiences; told how he, whose habit of writing had always been to touch and retouch, discard what lacked the vivacity of epigram, the nicety of the pointed phrase, who had fairly reveled in the mental atti-

tude of fastidious perplexity before any question of selection and choice, had suddenly taken to writing at railroad speed, on any subject, with the utmost promptness and decision settling every problem — mental, moral, religious, social, scientific, or diplomatic — which presented itself. He said that his working capacity surprised him. It showed that he only needed an overseer and a whip to drive him to accomplish something in the world. The only effective point of view from which to regard literature was the point of view of the pocket. He went into particulars, told her the exact amount of money his fortnight's hard toil had brought him in; he said he thought that if he were to work eighteen hours a day he might make twelve hundred dollars a year. "I should suppose two persons ought to be able to live on that, should n't you?" he asked.

"It seems to me a vast amount of money," said Kitty. "I never had more than a hundred francs of my own at once in all my life."

"Oh, that is the sort of millionaire you are," Glen exclaimed, — "a hundred francs! What did you do with a hundred francs?"

She described her extravagances. She had bought presents for everybody she knew when she came away from Florence. As she talked, all the old sparkle and animation came out in her face, in her tones, in her little gestures. He listened, smiling, and she smiled back at him. They both felt all alive with the happiness of being together.

It made no difference what they said to each other; whether it were light or serious, there was a spring of irrepressible mischief, an elastic rebound from whatever depressed and hampered, — a perpetual radiant gayety behind their words.

But all at once Glen remembered. The smile and glow went out of his face. What had startled him was the sound of the clock in the hall striking ten.

“I must go,” he said. “The marchesa will be returning. I have not a good conscience in meeting her.” They were still sitting opposite each other at the little table. He folded his arms on it and leaned forward.

“Kitty,” he said, “I am thirty-eight years old. You make me forget my age, my failures, my faults, — even my perception of what is right and just. I like you altogether too well; that is what is the matter.” As he spoke, he laid his hand on hers. The moment their fingers touched he melted into the tenderness he had forbidden. Yielding to an irresistible impulse, he pushed the table aside, rose to his feet, grasped both her hands in his, and looked into her face for one long moment.

“Kitty,” he said hoarsely, “I love you with all my heart. I don’t know how to tell you, I love you so. If — if — if I were not too old for you, — too miserably poor and good for nothing, — how happy we could be.” He drew her to her feet, pressed her slight figure to his breast, and his lips rested on her hair.

"Kitty," he said presently, "look up; I want to see your face."

But when she looked up he held her at arm's length.

"You are too sweet — too sweet — too sweet," he muttered; "I want to kiss you, but I shall not kiss you. Do you hear? I shall not kiss you. When they count up my sins, let them balance them against my not taking you in my arms this moment and kissing you."

An irresistible little laugh burst from her. He placed her in her chair, then crossed the length of the room and stood by the chimney-piece. "Why don't you say something?" he demanded.

"I do not know what to say."

"I swear to you that is simply my case. I love you to distraction; but on my word I don't know what I ought to say. I want you to marry me. I feel as if we could be happier in scrambling along somehow together than the richest and luckiest people in the world. You like me, don't you, Kitty?"

She nodded.

"I could make you happy, could n't I, Kitty?"

She nodded again.

"I know that as well as I know my own soul. And yet at this moment, when I long to make you promise to be mine unalterably, there comes that horrid doubt. I'm an old, battered fellow. All my youth has gone. Everything is before you — everything. I do not dare say that I will take

your life into my hands. I am so afraid of spoiling it,—of marring it.”

She flew towards him. She laid her hands on his breast and looked up pleadingly.

“Glen,” she said, “Glen!”

“Kitty,” he answered, “Kitty!” His face twitched with emotion. Those two small, clinging hands seemed a weight almost more than he could bear. Then came the sound of carriage wheels.

“Oh, there is mamma!” Kitty exclaimed, shrinking back.

“I will go,” said Glen. “I could n’t face her at this moment. You will tell her everything, I suppose. Of course tell her everything.”

The look of age and gloom had returned and deepened on his face.

“She will be very angry with me,” he said. He stretched out his hands to Kitty with a dreary look. “Tell me once you love me,” he said softly. “Say ‘Glen, I love you dearly!’” After she had faintly echoed his words, he murmured, “I needed to hear it once,” pressed his lips to the palm of her hand, and went straight out, without looking back.

Kitty followed him to the door, and, in an excitement which was not mere hope or fear, pain or pleasure, but pure, triumphant joy, stood waiting for her mother.

CHAPTER XVI.

"YOUTH SHOWS BUT HALF."

THE carriage stopped at the curbstone, and Richard Amory alighted and handed out his sister.

"Is thee still up, Kitty?" he asked. "I supposed thee had been asleep these two hours."

"Why, Kitty," said the marchesa in her turn, "you told me you were going to bed at nine o'clock."

As she came up the steps, she began unwinding a boa of white ostrich feathers from her head and shoulders. The light from within falling on her face gave a striking effect to her features.

Kitty threw her strong young arms round her mother.

"Oh, you are so perfectly lovely, mamma," she murmured, and devoured her with kisses.

Kitty had been, of late, so quiet and self-contained that this sudden return to her old expansiveness, her old caressing habit, even while it pleased Constance, perplexed her. To leave a young girl at home at seven o'clock who declares she does not mind being left since she longs only to go to bed, and, on returning toward eleven o'clock, to find her eyes shining, her lips smiling, her face

full of warm color, would suggest to even the least logical of minds that something has happened in the interval. Constance felt an electrical force behind Kitty's exuberant embrace. They went in and stood exchanging a few words with Richard Amory, who was discoursing on the evening's experience.

"A little too much of everything," he said; "too many plates, too many courses, too many kinds of wine, too much talk, but too little thought."

"It was pleasant, it seemed to me," Constance returned. "If nobody was very wise, still everybody was good-natured and unpretentious."

But Richard Amory shook his head.

"If thy thoughts come and go like the bubbles in the glass, be sure there is no good wine left beneath. The soul that waits and listens and concentrates itself finally knows."

The old Quaker sat down to meditate on the follies and vanities of the evening. Constance and Kitty kissed him, then went upstairs together. When they were inside the bedroom, Constance closed the door, and turned up the lights.

"Mamma," Kitty exclaimed excitedly, "kiss me again. Oh, I am so happy!"

Constance obeyed, but she trembled. She knew that some ordeal was before her.

"What has happened?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, mamma, he loves me. You thought it was all my absurdity. But he loves me!"

"Of whom are you speaking?" demanded Constance.

"Cousin Glen. Of course it is cousin Glen."

"What does it mean? Has he been here?"

"He stayed until he heard the carriage wheels in the drive."

Constance sank down in the easy-chair by the side of the bed. She felt fettered, cramped, chilled.

"Tell me just what has happened," she said. In all Kitty's life she had never heard her mother speak so coldly.

"Mamma, you seem so displeased," she faltered, aghast.

"I wish to understand what has taken place," Constance replied. "Then I can tell you whether or not I am displeased."

Kitty stood before her at a little distance. What she experienced was a delicious sensation of happiness. Everything else was a dream. Her words burst from her broken, incoherent, — now coming in a rapid gush, then dragging one after the other, as by hard effort. She could not penetrate her mother's state of mind in the least. She had expected Constance to be as happy as herself.

"I was playing solitaire; I was half asleep; I had never once dreamed of anything happening to-night. Then, all at once, there he was. He did not ring; he opened the shutter and came in through the window. He told me to go on playing. But, after a little, I — had — to — give — it — up. What he said first was that I had deserted him, — deserted him for Teddy. He has been thinking all the time, of late, that it was Teddy I

liked. He praised Teddy, — said he was all that he himself was not."

She broke off, and looked wistfully at her mother, as much as to say, "You understand it all now?"

Constance made a little gesture. "Then he told you" — she suggested.

"Then he asked me if I wanted him to go away."

"And you said 'No'!"

"What else could I say, mamma? I was so happy in seeing him again. I had been only half alive when he did not come."

"Did you tell him that?" Constance made this inquiry in a suffering voice.

"No, no, no!" Kitty cried. "I told him nothing." She laughed exultingly. "I know what you fear, mamma. But I remembered your lesson. I assure you I hardly said one word. Somehow I could not speak. Besides, I did not feel as if I needed to speak. It was he who talked, — it was he who said, 'I love you!' He said it not only once but twice — three times. In one way or another he told it a dozen — twenty times. There is no doubt of it at all. *He loves me*. He loves me dearly."

A new sweetness, a new tenderness came out as she spoke. It was evident to Constance that every fibre of the young girl's being vibrated with happiness. It would have been impossible to imagine a more perfect sincerity of joy than declared itself in every look and tone.

"Mamma," she went on, with a half laugh, "he even thinks that I am beautiful! Is it not absurd? And particularly when he has so criticised me, so derided me, that I have often seemed to be sitting on pins and needles when he looked at me; I used to long to look nice, just in order that cousin Glen should not laugh at me and pick faults in me. Yet to-night he said, only just now, before you came" — She hesitated, crimsoned, then laughed, and, quite shamefaced, threw herself on her knees and buried her face in her mother's lap. "I cannot say it, — it is so foolish," she said, with another gurgling little laugh. Constance, divining the sweet, passionate fondness that lay behind this half confession, shivered from head to foot. But she clasped her arms about the girl and held her closer.

"Did cousin Glen speak of my having any voice in the matter?" she asked dully.

"Oh yes. He said more than once that you would not like it. He said he was afraid to see you."

"Afraid to see me?"

"He said that you would not approve, — that nobody would approve, — that he himself did not approve of it in the least. He said he had no right to say a word to me. To begin with, he was too old; to begin and end with, he was too poor; but that the actual point was he was too miserable a failure. 'In all the world,' he said, 'I have just one single friend who loves me and believes in me, and that is John.'"

Kitty, gaining courage as she spoke, had raised her head. Her voice rang out clearly as she repeated Glen's words with just a touch of drollery, but at the end her voice broke into a sob.

"That sounds just like Glen," Constance said, with a sigh. "He is irresponsible. He has been all his life a man in search of sensations. I ought to have realized it. I ought to have foreseen this."

Kitty followed her mother's words with intense interest.

"Do you mean that you" — she began to question, but Constance raised her hand.

"I have to think a little about the matter," she said quietly. "I must have a talk with Glen. He has told you himself that he ought never to have spoken to you, that he is too old" —

"Oh, I would not have him any younger, mamma."

"That he is too poor" —

"I should so dislike to be rich, mamma *mia*."

Constance smiled in spite of her anxious, troubled mind. She lifted Kitty to her feet. "Promise me one thing, Kitty," she said, "that you will think no more about it to-night. Go to bed and sleep."

"I will go to bed," said Kitty. "Perhaps I may go to sleep. But I cannot help thinking about it. Why, mamma, he loves me! You don't begin to know what it means that he loves me. Here I have been so ashamed of myself for caring about him, but all the time *he loves me*."

"We will not say another word about it to-night. We are both going to bed. We are both so tired."

"I never can be tired again, mamma."

They were walking towards Kitty's room as they spoke, — a pretty little maiden's bower, hung with white and rose color, and now softly lighted by a lamp burning behind a pink shade. They happened to pause just in front of the oval mirror, and Kitty, when she caught a glimpse of herself, gave a cry of delight.

"Why, mamma, I *am* beautiful!" she exclaimed. "I did not really believe him when he said I was." She looked again at the image, with its dark eyes and its mouth like a vivid scarlet flower; then, leaning forward, kissed her reflection in the glass. "Oh, I am so glad, so glad, so glad I did look nice," she added. She met her mother's glance. "Do you not think I look nice?" she asked naïvely.

Constance passed her hands over the soft contours of the girl's face.

"I know what *I* think of your looks," she said, kissing her. "You do not need to go to other people for compliments."

Kitty was now comparing the two faces reflected in the mirror.

"Of course," she observed, "I am not beautiful as you are, mamma *mia*. You are like a queen. But then, just for poor little me, I rather like my own face."

"Vanity!"

"But if he loves me?"

"You must go to bed; you must go to sleep."

"The idea of sleeping! I am pretty, charming, quite adorable, and he loves me!"

Constance's hands had been busy in unfastening the white frock, unknotting ribbons, and undoing buttons. Five minutes later, Kitty, in a long white slip like a baby's, was kneeling by the bedside saying her prayers. Her devotions lasted twice as long as usual, and Constance knew that the girl was praying for the new hope, — praying for what must be denied her, for what must never, never come to pass.

Kitty crept into her little white bed presently. Her mother bent over and caressed her.

"Now go to sleep," she said, then reached closer for one more kiss. She extinguished the lamp and went into her own room, and stood at the open window listening to the wind, which had been rising all the evening and now blew a gale. A weird moonlight showed the fantastic shapes of the trees as they bent writhing in the blast, and heightened the weary, melancholy feeling Constance had of somehow being alone outside of the world.

As she stood, suddenly there came the sound of a patter along the floor. She turned; there was a long, lithe shape, the twinkle of white feet, and Kitty darted towards her with a little elfish laugh.

"Mamma, he loves me!" she exclaimed, and clasped her mother in her strong young arms.

"But this is nonsense," said Constance.

"I know it is. Still something bubbles up within me. I feel like laughing and like crying; I feel like praying too. I love cousin Glen, — but that is not all of it. I love you just as much, and uncle Richard. I love the whole world. I am so happy."

Constance led her back to her bed, sat down on the bedside, and leaned over her until she slept. Then she went again to her own room, and again stood by the window, still incapable of any connected thought.

What she felt was intense anger against Glen, — a wholly righteous wrath.

At ten o'clock next day Glen came to see her. They were expecting guests, and Richard Amory had driven with Kitty across the country to meet them at the Junction. Constance sat alone in her brother's library waiting for her visitor. It had rained in the night, half cleared at dawn, but the south wind still blew, and sunshine and cloud chased each other.

As Glen came towards her, he was conscious of a change in Constance: her face showed certain deep lines about her mouth he had never seen before, still courage, and a sort of exaltation. She also found a difference in him. He looked subdued, chastened, rather etherealized.

She gave him no greeting, but said in a tone of acute reproach, —

"If it had been an open enemy that had done me this dishonor, I could have borne it. But it

was even thou, my companion, my guide, mine own familiar friend."

"I know that I have done wrong," he said, sinking down into a chair at some distance. "It troubles you; I see that. I, too, am not in an over-buoyant mood."

"I have not slept."

"Nor I."

"It disturbs your conscience."

"I am afraid it was not my conscience that kept me awake. I was too awfully happy to sleep." As he said this, perhaps to hide the expression of his face, he flung back his head and looked towards the ceiling. "You see, Conny," he added, after a moment's silence, "I never was really happy before in my life, — at least not since mamma died."

"Oh, Glen!"

"Still, I hated to think it would make you miserable." He paused a moment, then burst out anew, "Conny, I have been the loneliest fellow on earth; I have had nothing and nobody but John. When I began to think that she really cared for me, it brought a new heaven, a new earth."

"Your words have a sting in them for me."

"That I blame you for my loneliness?"

"Oh no; I do not take your loneliness to heart."

"You mean I suggested that she cared for me first? No woman ever cared for me before. Kitty's love was a spontaneous gift."

"It hurts me to hear you say it."

"To me it is so beautiful."

"Oh yes; you were *ennuyé*. I can fancy that it flatters, charms, fascinates you for the moment to feel that an ignorant young girl idealizes you."

"Do not accuse me of cynicism. With all my faults I was never cynical; and now" —

Constance had risen; she walked three steps towards Glen, and stood there for a moment looking at him.

"I cannot let her marry you," she said in a low voice.

"I told her you would say so." Glen also had risen. His face had grown pale. His tone was cold and formal. "But please tell me just what your reasons are for rejecting me."

"Because she is my child, — my child for whom I have done everything, — for whom I must do everything."

"But can you do everything for her?"

"Yes," answered Constance, as if wondering at the question. "It would be strange indeed if I could not do everything for my own child."

"It is not for me to doubt your efficacy." He said this, smiling, but Constance suspected some irony behind his words.

"What could you do for her?" she demanded. "I grant that for six months you might find her a charming plaything."

"Do you think I could make her happy for six months?"

"What are six months in a woman's life?"

"I have lived so meagrely, it seems to me a great deal to be happy for six months."

"You know nothing of life ; you know nothing of women."

"It does seem to me that I know Kitty. Life I may not know, because I have never had a chance to try it. But I believe I could make Kitty happy."

"Happy for six months !"

"You seem to doubt the permanence of any feeling in me, but I was faithful to you for twelve years, Conny."

"Faithful to me !" she repeated. "How faithful ?"

Question and answer had flashed back and forth like equal stroke and counterstroke ; but, as if this thrust of the rapier probed his conscience, he suddenly gave up parrying her words. He looked like a man disgusted with himself, seized with remorse, even with a wish to repent, if it had been worth while. He went to the mantelpiece, turned his back to her, and leaned his head on his hands.

"If I have sometimes wanted the assurance of being alive," he murmured, without looking at her, "if I have been at times desperate with loneliness, half mad with pain at my own failure, — still there has never been one moment, Conny, when" —

She caught at his meaning before he finished his speech.

"Oh, do not say that," she exclaimed ; "I am

grateful for all your friendship, Glen ; but, as you know very well, I never took you too seriously ; I was simply a peg on which to hang your ideals."

"If you had cared for me one moment, Conny, you would have known. Kitty does care for me, and that makes the difference. I have sometimes said to myself of late that you owed me this compensation."

"I could better marry you myself than give Kitty to you." She was so deeply in earnest she had no sense of the strangeness of her words. Meeting the measureless surprise of his glance, she went on, "Why, Kitty is my child ; I love her a thousand times better than I love myself. I have always forgotten myself in loving her. Don't you see how it is ?"

"I see that you think I'm a dismal failure ; that I have no money, no position, nothing to offer her."

"That sort of failure is nothing."

"But that sort of failure stands for everything."

"The sort of failure I care about means disenchantment ; it means deterioration ; it means being miserable."

His face startled her. He was frowning slightly ; his features had grown pale and set. He looked suddenly ten years older.

He became conscious of her gaze. He made an effort to smile ; his expression softened.

"Oh, Glen," she said wearily, "I hate to think I've hurt your feelings."

"Oh, go on. Say what you have to say. Let me know the very worst that is in your thoughts about me."

"The worst that is in my thoughts is that you are a man in quest of sensations ; and, when a man simply wants his imagination and senses stimulated, planets and solar systems do not suffice."

He stared at her as if dumfounded.

"Am I actually that sort of man?" he asked after a little pause, as if struck by the accuracy of her definition, but still a little incredulous.

"Oh, it's an interesting character and temperament," Constance now said. "Only when the happiness of one's daughter is at stake one is not artistic, Bohemian ; one is bourgeois, Philistine. Actually my ambition for Kitty is a very simple-minded one ; but, after all, the real point of my objection to the whole thing is that Kitty does not really love you."

"Has she told you so?"

"She may believe that she loves you ; she is only in love with the idea of being in love."

"Are you sure of that?"

His soft, persistent tone, indicating a clearer knowledge than her own, shook Constance's belief in her own statement.

"Sure? I am sure of nothing except that she is the merest child. Hitherto I have been almost her only companion. She has never felt her solitariness, for I have kept her busy, interested in all sorts of little, every-day things that occupied and

absorbed her mind and heart. She has never thought about love ; she has hardly known that such a sentiment existed. It was quite enough for her to love me. But, coming here, — thrown with so many intimate relatives, hearing the Darrow girls talk as if they were probing the deepest secrets of existence, — she has suddenly matured. Then, Glen, you are rather charming.”

“ I never charmed you, marchesa.”

She reached out her hand and laid it on his arm as he bent towards her, his acute, brilliant face just touched with mischief.

“ We have had the cream of acquaintance,” she said. “ We have been excellent comrades. I’m not easily charmed, — at any rate, I do not care very much about being charmed. I have my ideals ; I like stability, permanence, something that does not wax, nor wane, nor change.”

“ The rock of ages. You ought to have married John.”

She made no answer to this suggestion, but continued to look at Glen, her serene brown eyes dilated, a vivid spot of pink burning on each cheek. The effect of her words, of her gaze of clear insight, was deeper than she knew. Glen stood leaning against the desk, his arms folded, a half smile on his lips, but his eyes were covered by their lids. What he experienced was a dreary self-abasement, — a sense of eclipse.

“ I suppose you are right. I always go over to the enemy’s side. I always believed in the critics

who cut me up. But Conny, dear, just answer me this," he said, making one step forward. "If I were to set to work, make a good income, — in short, succeed as other men do, — would that alter your views?"

"The question of money has not entered into my calculations at all. You are not of the age when men suddenly change all the habits of their lives."

"You mean I am too old. I said so to Kitty, but all the same I don't believe it. I have been ill so much I have lost ten years out of my life, — actually I am only twenty-eight. What was it, Winkelmann said, 'The gods owe me this, for I was so unhappy when I was young.'"

"Oh, don't make me pity you. You would not want Kitty to marry you out of pity."

"Yes, I do. I'd take her on any terms."

"Now look at the matter practically. I can fancy you sitting down and laughing at your predicament with a helpless young wife."

"If we both sat down and laughed together" —

"That sort of laugh shortly becomes grim and tragic."

"Oh, John could put me in the way of" —

"Mr. Haliburton could not put you in the way of being the man to whom I could entrust my child. It's Kitty I am thinking of. It is Kitty that I should have to give up. *My child*. I should not be thinking of whether she could have one servant or five; one course for her dinner or six."

"Or none at all," suggested Glen.

"But whether she could keep her faith, whether each day would bring her better hopes and beliefs" —

"I wish," said Glen, as she broke off, "that one might matriculate, as it were — take a course for marriage as one does for medicine or the law, hear lectures, and pass an examination. I feel sure I should come out a first-class."

"Ah, you laugh at it."

"I dare not try to convince you of my earnestness. You are prejudiced against me. The trouble is not that I am too absolute a failure, too poor, too old, — but that" —

"The trouble is that while life is only beginning for Kitty, *you* have lived."

"You prefer Teddy Darrow."

As Glen said this, a new impression of the man and of his meaning all at once startled Constance. Up to this moment all that he had said had been, as it were, calculable, but his look of sharp-set melancholy, his tone of sombre disdain, suddenly made her insight outrun her theory. There was feeling in Glen, which so far he had struggled with and put down, — a strong, even a violent passion which he had not offered as a plea.

"I prefer no one," she made haste to say. "I feel about Kitty as the mother-hen might have felt if asked how she would prefer to have her chickens served up, that she did not wish them to be served up at all. I should particularly object to Kitty's marrying any one for five years to come."

"I might do something in five years."

Constance could not help shivering at the thought of a five years' cloud of hesitation, doubt, and expectancy thickening over her own and Kitty's life.

"Oh, Glen," she murmured. "Kitty is eighteen years old."

"I do not ask for any engagement. I only ask you to let me have my chance. Let me have those five years, Conny, to show what is in me, — even three of them. If I could feel that I had something to be constant to, — to do my best for, — something that was my own, — my very own" —

"Oh no, no, no."

"I only mean the idea of her, — of the way she jumped up from her chair when I came in last night; the way she stood looking at me. All that Kitty feels for me is my own, — my own from the very beginning. She gave it to me of her own free will. She does not only belong to you."

"You mean that she belongs in part to you."

"I wish she did, God knows. What I meant was that she belongs to herself, that she has some right to decide upon the worth of a feeling which began the very moment we met last May."

Constance sat silent, staring at him, trying to weigh his plea. To say to herself that Kitty's wishes or her soberest judgment had any right to be considered in the matter would be to let a little boat without compass, without even a rudder, drift out into deep seas before a gathering storm. As-

surely a mother has the right to decide what is her duty by her child. To say she has no right is to deny the fact that she is the mother. Yet if to use the right were to pierce Kitty's heart —

"Don't fear me. I will not even touch her fingers," said Glen. Constance had a horrible feeling of perplexity. She did not entirely trust her own feeling of passionate antagonism to all that Glen could offer, suggest, promise.

"Have you consulted Mr. Haliburton?" she asked forlornly.

No, Glen had said not a word to John about Kitty. He confessed this rather shamefacedly.

"He considers me still desperately in love with you," he added, and they both laughed. "I will consult with him gladly," Glen added. Constance had glanced at the clock. It was clear she expected Kitty to return, and he at once went his way.

CHAPTER XVII.

INS AND OUTS.

HALIBURTON had seen the change in Glen of course, — but the nature of the change had been unfathomable to his perceptions. For years, indeed down to two months back, all that womanhood contained for Glen had existed in Constance. He had had no idea of any happiness except what she could give him.

“It was all purely imaginary?” asked Haliburton bewildered. “Just a trick of speech, — a fashion of apprehending the charm of life?”

“Don’t ask me to define it,” said Glen. “I suppose I felt that Conny was beyond me. Kitty seems nearer, — more within reach.”

“Are you actually in love with Kitty?”

“I don’t wonder you mistrust me,” said Glen; “I think Conny herself mistrusted me, I said so little about my present feeling. But when a man has once had his say out he rather sickens of saying it over again.”

“But just a little while ago you were in love with the marchesa.” Haliburton was about to add that only a few weeks before he had been pleading with Constance, almost entreating her to marry Glen.

"It is quite possible," Glen observed after a moment's thought, "that even now if I saw them both struggling in the water unable to swim, the one I should make an effort to save would be Constance."

"Then you love her best."

"No, I don't. But I shan't explain. Kitty is mine; Constance never was mine. That makes all the difference. Constance is too perfect, too far above me — 'beauty too rich for use.' For Constance is far more beautiful than Kitty. I always did feel that if Constance were to accept me, my happiness would strike me dead. I should have burned up in pure flame — a masculine Semele."

To teach himself that Glen was in love with Constance, and that he himself must be loyal to Glen, had so long been a point of honor with Haliburton he hardly ventured to reckon on a different basis. Indeed, this new love affair seemed too much like one of Glen's haphazard impulses. And now, as if to deepen the impression that he was talking at random, Glen must go and say that if he were to save one of the two women from drowning, it would be the mother.

Haliburton pressed question after question.

"I simply need to understand," he said.

Glen ended by kindling altogether. His feeling for Kitty, his daily comfort in her, his great longing need of her, all passed into speech. When had it happened that he fell out of love with Constance

and in love with Kitty? He had never been in love with Constance. It was a young poet's *métier* to adore, and he had adored. Haliburton might have said to himself that this over-nice balancing of feeling on a needle-point ought to have come earlier. He dared not think of the emancipation which might lie in Constance's being free.

"Are you sure that this is a real feeling for Kitty — not a mere, foolish vagary?" Haliburton demanded.

But when Glen answered in speech like flame, there was still another question besides the reality of Glen's passion for Kitty, or Kitty's feeling for Glen. Haliburton said that he must have a talk with the marchesa, and on the following day, after this talk had taken place, he was in a less bewildered state of mind.

"I know," Haliburton had begun by saying to Constance, "that Glen has given you a good deal of trouble. But if I know Glen at all he is getting over his early faults, — the sort of faults which are apt to beset clever men before they have a real career. He is something more than a clever man, — he is a fine fellow, a dear fellow."

"Oh yes, Glen is charming," Constance replied. "But all the more because he is charming he will make Kitty miserable."

When Haliburton waited for her to explain she went on, —

"He has all sorts of talents; he dazzles her

with them ; then his quick changes of mind, whenever a fresh whim seizes him, amuse and interest her. He has, besides, a sort of magnetic power over her, — I mean the sort of influence which carries her off her feet. She would not know right from wrong, black from white, if he wished to make her think and feel as he chose."

"Does not this show " — Haliburton began.

"It shows me that I ought not to have let her see him so much. It had not occurred to me when I saw them chatting and laughing together that such terms of intimacy were anything more than cousinly. I had forgotten that young girls were so impressionable. I had forgotten, too, that men love youth, — love it insatiably."

Haliburton would have tried to soften this generalization, at least to make her objection more narrow and specific.

"I find a great deal of fault with myself," Constance made haste to say. "I seem to have gone on permitting Glen to keep up the fiction of his caring about me. I do not need to explain to you, for you know, Mr. Haliburton, that twelve years ago Glen asked me to marry him, — asked me two or three times over. He left Italy and I saw him no more until I met him here. I had refused him, perhaps a little too much on the ground that I should never marry again. What I ought to have told him was that I did not love him, — could not love him ; that as a friend, a cousin, a comrade, I enjoyed him, but that no closer tie was pos-

sible. As it was, it seems as if I had permitted him to sacrifice all these twelve years to a fantasy. Then when he saw me again he found out what a false and unreal fantasy it was. Actually I had robbed him, left him hungering and thirsting in the wilderness. He wanted something real, — something to amuse and stimulate him, — and Kitty has fascinated him for the moment."

It was clear to Haliburton that Constance's mind was quite made up. She had marshaled every possible argument; she had had time to get behind intrenchments and was ready to stand a siege if need be. She objected to Glen, but what she particularly objected to was giving up Kitty. She was nervously excited, in a state of extreme tension, although from force of habit she made an effort to appear tranquil and self-possessed. Haliburton had to own that he had not, in this crisis, the courage or the presumption to offer advice. He heard what she had to say, then went back to Glen.

"She says that either she must take Kitty away or you must go away," was his message.

Glen had listened to the account of the interview so far with an intensely eager face.

"Of course I shall go away at once," he now said.

Haliburton put his hand on the other's shoulder.

"I told her you would do so."

"I must see Kitty first."

"Yes, you can see her, — but not alone."

"Oh no, not alone. If you told me I could see her alone I should say, 'No, John, I prefer to have you with me.'"

"What the marchesa really hopes is that the whole affair may die out. She will be grateful to you if you will raise no expectations, no hopes of any ultimate engagement in Kitty's mind."

"Does she suppose that we are as mummies, — that we have no blood in our veins, no faith in our hearts?"

"You know what she means."

"Better than she knows what I mean. The trouble is with Conny, she is too cut-and-dried. She married Phil Amory because she could n't help it, — because the whole thing was arranged; then when he died she married a dreary old pedant because it seemed safe. She does n't know what love is, — she has led such a monotonous, such a dispassionate life."

"She loves Kitty."

"I wish she did n't," said Glen illogically. "If she would let me have Kitty the transport of it would give me a capacity for work. Kitty would enjoy the combat — the struggle of the race in midstream. She would kindle at the danger of it; she would rather like whirlpools and rapids."

"A man ought to be able to say to the woman with whom he plunges into the current, 'Trust me, I can swim for both.'"

They dropped into silence for a while. Haliburton looked at Glen from time to time and saw

that his brow was furrowed, his eyes dark and troubled, his teeth set hard.

"I shall not give her up," he said finally. "I mean that she shall be my wife. It would kill me to think of stopping just here. Why, John, I did not even kiss her."

"I am glad that you had so much self-restraint."

"She is so young," said Glen, with a sigh. "There was just a thin fragile barrier like a veil between us that evening. She had somehow grown exquisitely shy, — until then she had not known what fear of me was. I did n't disturb it." Something stirred his recollection and he laughed. "Trying to recall afterwards what she said I could hardly think of a word. She was like the French girl in a pretty little thing somebody wrote whose mother tells her to say nothing to a man except '*Oh, monsieur!*' but who says '*Oh, monsieur!*' with such effectiveness, with so many intonations, with so many nice shades of expression, that all is said." Glen jumped up and began pacing the room. "When one is in love," he now said, "every fact, every detail of the passion seems an absolutely fresh thing in the mind's history, — but everybody who can hold a pen has been fooling over descriptions of it since hieroglyphics were invented." He came back presently to Haliburton.

"I'll go to town and stay until I finish up the six weeks," he said, "then I had already decided to take that place in New York. Suppose I were to succeed, — suppose I were to make enough to

live on, — I tell you, John, I shall hold out my arms to Kitty and she shall come."

"She would never marry you without her mother's consent."

"She shall marry me, I say. That is, if I have the pluck and the health to get on."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GLEN SAYS GOOD-BY.

KITTY had waked up on the morning after Glen's visit feeling perfectly happy. The beauty and the wonder of the clear knowledge that Glen really loved her still overmastered her intellect as well as her fancy. The experience had lifted her off her feet ; she felt as if she floated rather than walked. Nothing was an effort. It seemed so natural, so necessary, to be more grateful, more loving, more appreciative than she had ever been before, more anxious to make others happy. The cook sent up a little dish for luncheon of which Kitty was especially fond ; she must run down to the kitchen to thank Martha for the galantine. The man was going round and round the lawn, clipping the grass ; it seemed to her such goodness that Perry should expose himself to this hot sun for their comfort, she ran out to him bare-headed with a glass of lemonade. She would have offered something to the horse who drew the mowing-machine, but Perry, much refreshed by his cooling draught, wiped his lips on the sleeve of his blue shirt, and, thanking her kindly, told her the beast was used to it.

How beautiful the world was that day and the following days. The very way the tops of the great tulip-trees rested against the sky was enough to live for. On the terrace were two *pergolas* of clematis, — one all over great white stars and the other purple. To sit and look at them was a revelation of form and color. To see a humming-bird poise itself before the red flowers of the trumpet-creeper was an experience to watch for hour by hour. Still, although silence and reverie held so much, she overflowed with talk the moment she was with any one, — she was ready to listen and sympathize even more than she talked. Richard Amory suddenly found that he could pour out all his sombre ruminations, his sharp-set criticisms of life to Kitty. He could tell her his whole story.

“Thy child is all at once a woman,” he observed to Constance.

Constance winced at the word. She would not admit it to herself, but she was conscious that there was an inexplicable difference in her own intercourse with Kitty. Yet the young girl had never in her life been so humble, so anxious to please her mother. She listened attentively to the least word, her eyes resting on Constance’s as if waiting to hear more; when she answered, her voice softened and grew more caressing.

They happened at this time to be entertaining friends for a few days, and this was, Constance believed, a fortunate circumstance, and helped to bridge over an awkward interval. There had been

no allusion to Glen since the evening when they had said so much. Kitty had asked no questions, she had apparently felt no anxieties, not even curiosity.

It was a very hot day when Haliburton took Glen over to make his farewell visit to Waldstein. Constance knew that they were to come, and said to her guests after luncheon that they would have tea under the tulip-trees at five o'clock. Upstairs she observed to Kitty, —

“Glen is coming to say good-by.”

“To say good-by?” Kitty repeated as if in a dream. But Constance noticed that she turned from red to white and from white to red, and sat down suddenly as if needing support.

“He is going away for a time,” Constance said. “We have talked everything over, and it seems best.”

While Constance was speaking Kitty looked at her with intense eagerness. The young girl was presently quite tranquil again and self-possessed; a smile hovered about her lips. But when she rose to go into her own room she tottered slightly.

“The heat overpowers me,” she murmured. She sank down on the window-seat and soon fell asleep. At a quarter before five Constance, dressed and ready to go down, awoke her.

“Time to dress, dear,” she said. “I have put out your thinnest frock. It is so very warm.”

She descended, and it was not long before Haliburton and Glen emerged from the woods and

crossed the lawn. Constance, her brother, and their three guests were sitting together by the tea-table, but Kitty was not there.

"Kitty will be down presently," Constance said, observing Glen's wandering glance, and when she saw, after a time, a flutter of white in the doorway, she remarked to him, "There she is."

She seemed not only to permit him to go and meet Kitty, but to expect it. Nevertheless, her magnanimity put Glen freshly on his guard. He walked towards the young girl apparently with his ordinary nonchalance, and stood waiting at the foot of the steps for her to descend. He forgot to speak for a moment. In a thin, white dress, which, with its light ample breadths floated airily about her, her throat and head rising out of delicate, crisp frillings of lace, she looked fairer, softer, more exquisite than he had ever seen her. She was not pale, rather rosy instead, and there was spread over her whole face, her motion, her manner, a sort of dreaminess; her eyes met his with a languor which was new to him.

"I have been asleep," she said, with humble apology. "Indeed, I am half asleep now. It is so warm."

"Asleep are you, you baby?" murmured Glen, smiling at her.

They did not shake hands. It seemed to Glen as if she took his presence quite passively; she did not after the first moment try to meet his eyes. He could only utter words of banter. He

felt moved to the deepest tenderness, but the veriest nonsense came from his lips. He had hardly slept of late ; all to-day he had been thinking of what he should say to her, or rather what he could leave unsaid, and yet utter one speech, one final word which should reach her heart, — like a seed which might swell, put forth its root, and fix itself there. It was fairly comical to him that at this moment she should be drowsy, inert, half indifferent. But he liked it. He would not even say, —

“ Kathleen mavourneen, awake from thy slumbers.”

He was moved rather to tread softly, to hush every suggestion that could rouse her. He felt enough for both.

Kitty went straight to the table after giving her fingers to Haliburton as she passed. She always served the tea when they had it out of doors. She took the eyes of all the group, so that they dropped their talk. Constance almost held her breath as she looked at her daughter. Kitty had been growing prettier and prettier all summer ; at this moment she had burst into delicate bloom, like a wonderful hothouse rose. And it was all for Glen. He was to carry away this impression of her, — a bewitched, undying sense of the girl's sweetness and loveliness which would fix itself in his permanent consciousness.

The tea to-day was a sort of punch ; there was a great bowl full of lumps of ice and slices of pineapple and lemon on which strong, hot tea had

been poured. Kitty ladled it out into little glass cups with handles, and took them, two at a time, and offered one to the right and the other to the left.

"Ah, Kitty, Kitty," said Richard Amory, shaking his head at her, "thee told me yesterday thee was a good Quaker, but thee does not look like a good Quaker to-day."

She smiled and nodded, but there seemed to be a dullness in her head, a roaring in her ears. Perhaps her heart was beating too fast. Presently, when she had given everybody tea, she sat down on the nearest bench, feeling quite helpless.

Glen had waited, and now came and sat down beside her.

"Are you still asleep?" he inquired.

"Fast asleep."

"Well, I am glad; I can say what I please; I have to say it; you need not listen. It is not very important. Did I tell you the other night that I loved you? Well, to-day I love you just one thousand times more than I loved you then. Do you hear? Just one thousand times more."

She looked away from him. A great wave of exultation seemed to rise in her and almost overpower her. She felt blindly for her fan. It was he who lifted it from her lap and began to fan her.

"But your mother will not give her consent to our marriage," he went on. "And I am going away. I shall not see you again, perhaps, for a long while; I shall not write to you; I shall leave

you to forget me, if you can and will. But I do not think you will find it too easy. It seems to me that what I feel for you and what you feel for me is too sweet — oh, too surpassingly sweet — to melt away and leave no trace."

"I shall not forget you," said Kitty, and she turned and looked at him an instant with a calm timidity.

"You must make me no promises," said Glen. "I wish your mother to feel that I have not bound you by one single word that could hamper your absolute free play. But I am yours, Kitty, absolutely. I shall think of you all the time. Even though you do not hear my name for months and months, I shall not only have been thinking of you, but working for you. I am tired of being a failure. If there is anything in me it is going to come out now. I am going to take my life, my brain, my heart, my nerves between my two hands, as it were, and compel them to give me something. If it kills me, — why then it is over and done with. That problem is ended. But, Kitty, if I die, all through your long life, and I hope your happy life, just remember that one poor fellow was eternally grateful to you."

"You must not even think of such a thing," said Kitty. "Of course you will not die."

Her childish, despotic air, her petulance, restored Glen to his balance. He laughed. The shadowy index hand pointing to the loss of all things, the dearest things, was not seen by Kitty. A little

more and he would have been lachrymose. He had had his say, and Constance had not once glanced in his direction. It is, however, presumable that she was not insensible when he rose from Kitty's side, came back to the group, joined in the talk, then presently took his leave along with Haliburton, saying to one after the other "Good-by" without any particular emphasis.

"Good-by, Kitty."

"Good-by, cousin Glen."

Constance heard these words with an unspeakable relief. Kitty stood looking after the two men as they crossed the grounds. As he entered the path under the trees, Glen turned, looked back, and waved his hand. Kitty raised hers in return, then she sat down as if at the end of her strength.

Constance went up to her.

"Kitty, dear," she said.

"Yes, mamma."

"We shall miss cousin Glen dreadfully."

"Dreadfully," Kitty repeated. It was not, however, the tone of one who is left un comforted.

CHAPTER XIX.

A BIRD IN THE SOLITUDE SINGING.

OTHER people missed Glendenning Rennie after he had gone. One of them was Haliburton.

"Pray come and go exactly as if nothing had taken place," Constance said to him.

But there was a difference, nevertheless. Glen's absence hung heavily upon Haliburton when he was at home. He felt a vague discomfort, — a discomfort which gradually defined itself as a restless curiosity about the future. He still saw Glen in town, and twice Glen came out for the evening. There was much talk between the two. The first question Glen asked, was whether John had seen Constance and Kitty; he was eager for the most minute details. Haliburton had little to tell, except that it was evident the marchesa and Kitty were on the easiest of terms, simply and frankly depending on each other and doing everything together.

Glen bore no grudge against Constance. He perfectly understood her doubts of him. She had offered him sharp tonics, and they had braced him. He was proud of himself for having a mind for tonics. In place of the old anguish of despair he

was now full of another emotion, — that of present happiness and desires and beliefs in the future. He confessed himself absolutely commonplace and sordid in his ambitions. Constance might not care for money in itself, but money meant substance, solidity. Hitherto he had lived by caprice ; he had sacrificed none of his individuality ; he had substituted ideas of what he liked for action. Now there was to be no pause, no let-up. He had already found a place in a publishing house in New York.

“I told them,” he remarked to John, “that I had taken two degrees, that I understood Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, a little Hebrew ; that I not only read but spoke fluently five modern languages ; that I was a good stenographer, could operate the type-writing machine, had published a book of poems besides having written both prose and poetry for magazines ; that I had conducted newspapers and been a musical, dramatic, and art critic. They offered me at first fifty dollars a month, but when I told them I habitually worked nineteen hours a day, they raised it to eighty. You see genius and merit do tell even in this world.”

“Perhaps when they find out what a clever dog you really are they will double the salary,” said Haliburton.

“Oh, I shall get on,” said Glen. “Only I wish, John, that now and then you would put Kitty in mind of me.”

Haliburton was ready enough to do it. What chilled and dispirited him was that Constance and

Kitty had begun to settle down as it were upon new terms ; there was a suggestion that a disturbing, harassing element had gone out of their lives ; that in Glen's absence the marchesa was reappropriating Kitty, drawing her closer. Once more he had that feeling that there was no place in Constance's life for himself. Her unalterable serenity and completeness moved him to dejection. Of course she was perfectly happy with Kitty. No love can surpass that of a parent for a child. Haliburton said dryly to himself, that no doubt if he had married at the age of twenty-five, he too might be wrapped up in his offspring, but having no children, and being in love with Constance, he had no sufficient satisfaction in his life, and he viewed with jealous disquietude her complete intercourse with Kitty, who turned to her mother for interpretation of all her ideas, hopes, intuitions, and beliefs.

Other people besides even Haliburton missed Glendenning Rennie, and one of them was Agatha Darrow.

The Ambury Darrows had been away at the seaside. When they came back about the middle of September, they brought new life and animation to the quiet neighborhood. Everybody was coming and going ; questions were asked ; whatever one was doing had to be explained in due and logical order. Sue had a thousand new ideas ; a hundred schemes. Agatha had one.

"And you have been going on in just the same way," Agatha said to Constance and Kitty. "Just

the same coming down to breakfast, talking, reading, seeing the same tiresome people. Oh, how wonderful you are, never to be thoroughly weary of your life."

"*You* have had delightful times of course," said Constance. "Everything has been fresh, new, and vividly interesting."

"Nothing was ever so dreary," said Gatty. "I did not care for anything in the least. One has to fall into the fiction that society is delightful, or else it is the most absurd business. The first thing one does when one goes to a summer resort is to see people and hear what everybody is doing. 'Oh, how nice!' one says. Then one does what everybody else is doing. 'Oh, how tiresome!' one thinks. Still one goes on exchanging phrases: 'How do you take your tea?' 'Ah yes, this is delicious.' 'Do you like the seaside or the mountains best?' If I were to reply, —

'Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains, each a mighty voice,'

they would consider me cracked. I have not had a real human talk since I went away. I want a real human talk. May Kitty come and walk with me in the woods, marchesa?"

"She will be delighted, I am sure." The two girls set out at once.

There was still the gold-green glimmer of summer through the woods. The snakeweed and the beard-tongue still carried the last of their frail, white flowers which lighted up the twilight of the

deeper thickets, and the asters' star-like blossoms in blue and violet were everywhere. The little rill, which through the hot months had been almost dried to its source, now slid, singing, through mossy margins. Agatha paused and looked down into the leaf-strewn spring under a green bank.

"I wanted to take this walk again," she exclaimed. "Do you know when I took it last?"

"Before you went to the seaside?"

"The last day Glen was here," said Agatha.

Kitty looked at Agatha, her eyes quickened by expectation.

The sound of that interdicted name fell on her ears like music, reminding her that deep down in her soul there lay a whole world of meaning, hidden, sacred, to which nobody could be admitted. Had Agatha glanced at Kitty at this moment, a part of her secret must have been discovered.

"I was coming along the path," Agatha continued, looking about her as if to be sure of the exact locality, "when I met him. He stopped short before me and asked where I was going. I replied that I was going nowhere in particular, and he remarked that he would go there with me. So we went on side by side. At first I talked, but finding that he not only made no response but did not even take the trouble to listen, I, too, said not one word. When we came to this spring he glanced at it and murmured, —

'In the desert a fountain is springing.'

He said it dreamily; he walked on just as we are

walking now, and when we reached that group of oaks, he broke silence again, —

‘ In the wide waste there still is a tree.’

He said it as he says so many things, you know, Kitty, with a little suggestion of whim and mischief, — his eyes half closed, his lips rather smiling. Then all at once a thrush gave its note, — first the whistle and then the carol.

‘ And a bird in the solitude singing,’

he added, and not another word did I hear from him until we came to the edge of the wood, when he suddenly held out his hand and said, ‘ Good-by, Gatty,’ and was off like a flash.”

Kitty had sunk down on the stump of a tree. She was laughing, — an irresistible little gurgling laugh.

“ It was droll, was it not ? ” said Gatty ; “ just like Glen. But, oh, it made me raging, furious.”

“ But why ? ” demanded Kitty.

“ Don’t you see ? ”

“ No.”

“ Of course ; you are an innocent child. You had not noticed what had been going on. It was the merest flirtation. He understands me, and he does not adore me. I don’t pretend to understand him ; I do not adore him, but he interests me ; I love to hear him talk ; I love to have him look at me. The way his eyes travel over my face simply puts me in good humor. I do not think I really care for him in the least, but yet in a way I care

for him more than I ever cared for anybody in my life. And he knows it. He knows that he moves me ; he knows that he can play upon me ; he knows that if he were to make any real attempt to win a genuine response, all my defiance, all my theories, would shrivel up and be without the least efficacy. He has talked to me endlessly ; he loves to talk to me, he says. He is audacious ; he does not stop at a trifle " —

" Gatty ! " cried Kitty, as if she were in pain.

" Well ? " answered Agatha, breaking off in the midst of her confession and looking with astonishment at Kitty's pale face and burning eyes.

" Do you mean that cousin Glen — made — love — to — you ? "

" You put it so solemnly. I mean that he has been playing with me as a cat plays with a mouse. For a month all interest, all devotion ; watching for me, — waiting for me. Then we meet in the wood. He has nothing to say ; but just observe the close suggestion of those three quotations. Do you know the fourth line ? "

" Yes," murmured Kitty, growing even more pale than before.

Still Agatha could not deny herself the pleasure of repeating, —

" In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of thee."

" He meant nothing," she went on. " He was

simply playing out his part to the close. He knew that I would not absolutely believe that he was thinking only of me; he did not wish me absolutely to believe it, only to believe it up to a certain point. It was just a little light comedy episode, and now it is over."

"He was making love to you," Kitty repeated mechanically.

"Is a man never to make love? Is a woman never to have love made to her?"

"I thought — I thought," Kitty burst forth, "you did not care for such things."

"Care for such things! What am I but a woman? Not an intellect, not a soul, not a mere body, but a woman with a heart, senses, nerves, intellect, soul, and a life she has got somehow to spend. I'm the half of a complete being, and cannot help missing the other half. I have never seen it even in my dreams; but Glen has always come nearer to my ideal than any other man. He knows it; there is nothing he does not know where women are concerned. He was interested in seeing if he could make me in love with him a little. It was only that I wished to be touched and pleased. If he were to go down on his knees and ask me to marry him, I would not do it, for he does not love me. Indeed, I think in his secret heart he even laughs at me. There is only one woman whom he loves or has ever loved. After loving her, he never could love anybody else."

Agatha stopped in her rush of self-revelation and gave a significant little laugh.

CHAPTER XX.

TIME'S REVENGES.

KITTY had at first experienced the sweetest exultation ; she had had no doubt as to whom Glen had been thinking of in the wood on that day when they were to separate. But she had been bewildered by Agatha's own confidences. The torment of the situation put her in a fever. She was first hot, then she shivered. She seemed to have no strength. Something had stunned her heart.

But she made an effort to say, —

“ Whom do you mean ? ” She was swimming in uncertainty.

“ Why, have you never heard who was the heroine of Glen Rennie's ‘ Love Unfulfilled ’ ? ” Agatha demanded.

“ No.”

“ Can it be possible ? Why, all the world knows.”

“ I do not know.”

Kitty's face showed her effort to think acutely. But it was of no use. Her brain whirled.

“ There can surely be no harm in telling you. But try to guess.”

Kitty shook her head.

"Is it any one I know?"

"Somebody you know most intimately, — somebody you have seen morning, noon, and night all your life."

Kitty tried her wits at the riddle.

"Do you mean me?" she faltered.

"You, — you infant! I mean your beautiful mamma."

"Mamma!"

"Whom else?" As Agatha spoke, she suddenly caught Kitty's hands in one of hers and clasped her with her arm.

"Why, what is the matter?" she demanded.
"Are you fainting?"

As the two girls sat side by side on the trunk of a fallen tree, Kitty, turning perfectly white, had all at once swayed and had leaned against Agatha's shoulder for support. In another moment the weakness had passed. Her lips regained a trifle of color. Agatha deeply regretted her blunder; but who would have supposed the child could have been either so ignorant or so susceptible?

"I ought not to have told you," she said, "yet all the world knows it. And I remember you yourself telling me how Glen heard your mother's step on the stairs, — how he talked to her, listened to her" —

Again Kitty had to struggle for self-command.

"I suppose," Gatty went on, "that it makes you jealous that any one has dared to make love to your mother. But you may as well understand, once

for all, that Glen is only one of many. Glen simply paid the marchesa the highest compliment in his power to bestow. She was faithful to your father."

They looked at each other for a moment, tremulously, in silence.

Kitty drew a long breath finally, and said, "I thank you for telling me. It took me by surprise. We will not talk of it any more, please."

"No, we will not talk about it; nevertheless, you ought to glory in it. Did you ever hear of your beautiful Quaker ancestress, Elspeth Waldstein? When you go home, look at the little faded sofa which stands in your upper hall. That was Elspeth's. It used to have a place in the drawing-room. Once while she was sitting there, an English officer asked her to marry him. She declined politely, when he told her she seemed not to realize what an honor she was refusing. She drew herself up, and said, 'Friend, I have refused fifty offers from this very sofa.' Her blood runs in your veins. I have none of it. No man ever offered himself to me, and I dare say no man ever will. There is just that subtle difference in women. I do not desire fifty offers, not even one, — but I have some curiosity concerning the women men do make fools of themselves about."

Kitty proposed, in an indifferent manner, that they should go back, as if the question of love and marriage in no wise concerned or interested her. All through this interview she had had the sensation

of a man who finds himself in a marsh, feels himself sinking deeper and deeper at every step, yet has to go on in order finally to reach some sure footing. She hardly tried to listen to Agatha's flow of words.

"You are too sensitive, too emotional, too intense. I suppose it is your Italian blood. It cannot be your training; the marchesa is always so unalterably serene. It is not safe to feel so much, Kitty. It is a bad trick, this of idealizing everybody one cares for,—putting them on a pedestal, then, when you get tired of adoring them, pulling them down."

The moment they reached the point in the woods where their paths diverged, Kitty said good-by.

"You are not angry with me, dear?" said Agatha.

"Angry? Oh no. I am glad you told me."

Agatha shrugged her shoulders over Kitty's incomprehensibility, and set off towards home. Kitty, free to follow her own instincts, would have flown, but she seemed to have no strength. Her knees at times bent beneath her, and more than once she took hold of a shrub or tree that was in her path, and supported herself until she had re-gathered the force to go on. When she reached the house she went straight to her mother, who was in her room, standing before her mirror, putting the last touches to her toilette for dinner.

"I want to ask you a question, mamma," Kitty said. By this time the feeling that suspense was to be ended had nerved her. There was something

in her tone which made Constance turn and look at her with curiosity.

"What is it, dear?" she asked.

"Was Glen ever in love with you? Did he ask you to marry him? Did he write a book about you?" The three questions followed one another, each clear, concise, and in direct sequence.

"Who has told you this foolish thing?" demanded Constance, deeply pained and indignant.

"*You* ought to have told me, mamma," said Kitty. "If it is true that he was in love with you, — that he asked you to marry him, — I can never, *never* forgive you for not telling me."

She was standing at the door, — she tried to cross the room to reach her own chamber, but swerved a little, then sank down on her knees beside a chair and hid her face in the cushions.

Constance stood for a moment as if she was trying to take in the meaning of Kitty's words. Then she darted towards her, lifted the bent head, and, sitting down, drew it upon her lap.

"Kitty," she whispered, "Kitty," but no answer came.

"Kitty, look up and kiss me," she implored. "What is this? Why are you angry with me?"

"You know why I am angry with you."

"Because Glen when he was a mere foolish boy asked me to marry him, — fancied he was in love with me, — wrote ridiculous verses about me?"

"You might have spared me the — the ignominy of — of — of letting me go on believing — believing — when all the time he loved you."

"I have never in my life told any one that any man has asked me to be his wife. If such things have been told, other people have told them. I cannot understand how any woman ever speaks of such matters. If she accepts a man's offer, all the world knows ; if she rejects, nobody need know."

"I needed to know it."

"Why?"

"Because — because it shows me that Glen never loved me."

Constance understood on the instant that the girl's delicacy had taken a mortal hurt.

"I will tell you anything about my life, Kitty. There is nothing I will keep back. Perhaps I might have told you about Glen's early feeling if I had had any preparation for — for — what has happened. As it was — under the circumstances — you could hardly have expected me to bring up such a" — Constance broke off without trying to finish her sentence.

"You ought to have been frank with me," said Kitty, persisting. "You have treated me as a foolish child." She paused a moment, then lifted her head from her mother's knees and looked at her. "Tell me now, everything," she demanded.

"Everything?" Constance exclaimed. "Do you realize that Glen and I belong to a different generation from you? I was engaged to Philip when I was nineteen. Glen was seventeen, — the merest boy. Well, when he heard that I was to be married the next week, he came to me; he

made a scene, — said his heart was broken, — that I had broken it. That was three years and more before you were born.”

Kitty, looking at her mother, listened intently.

“That is not all?” she asked.

“No, that was the very foolish and presumptuous beginning. It was nine years later when you were six years old that I took you to the seashore, to the place where Glen was consul. It was to me almost the same as if he were my brother. He belonged to my family, — I was a widow, — I had a child. I did not go into society. It had not occurred to me that there was any danger of his renewing his boyish feeling, but he did.”

“Why did you not marry him?”

“Because I did not love him. Because I had you, — I had all I needed in my life.”

“But cousin Glen had nobody.”

“He had himself; he had his career; he had his life to make the most of.”

“You let him go on loving you?”

“I have never taken Glen very seriously. When a man is seriously in love he is not very manageable. Glen was manageable. If I would not marry him he was almost equally happy and comfortable as my friend; and I — I have always enjoyed talking with Glen. And just at that time it was as if I were pausing to take breath. My life had been so strange to me. I seemed to need to think about it hour after hour, — try to get used to it. Sometimes that summer, as I sat on the rocks looking off

at the Mediterranean, I would say to myself, 'Is it really I — Constance Amory?' Just to watch you as you played, to have Glen come and sit down beside me and talk over our old life here, quieted me, balanced me. You recall a good deal about it yourself, dear. Lucia was your *bonne*. You had not been quite strong, and the doctor had told me to let you paddle about in the water in your bare feet as fishermen's children do. You and Glen used to run races along the sands. I was making plans, trying to settle all the details of my future life. I had decided to leave Rome and all your father's relatives and live by myself with you. Seeing Glen made me feel once more as if I had a life of my own to lead; I lifted up my head and said 'Kitty and I against the world.' Think how happy we were all those years in the villa at Fiesole."

"Glen was not happy," said Kitty. "I think, mamma, you have no heart, — no heart at all."

"Oh, Kitty!"

"It makes me almost hate you. He loved you, — he needed you. You had no thought of him then except as he was somebody you had known, different from papa's relatives who cramped and fettered you. You went off with me and left him. You had rest and relief, — he had none. That was what made me love him, — that he was sad, — that he needed comfort. I thought — I thought it was *I* who could give it. All the time it was you he loved but who would not love him, — you

would not even let me help him. You put a doubt between us. Yet at the same time you let me deceive myself."

Constance gazed at Kitty in astonishment. The girl had not risen from the floor, but had withdrawn from her mother's support, and, kneeling at a little distance, poured forth this indictment not passionately nor impetuously, but as if she had weighed each word, and now gave voice to a long-suppressed condemnation.

"If you had told me all this story long ago," she went on relentlessly, "I should have understood; I could have judged."

"I am sorry now that I did not tell you, Kitty," Constance said calmly.

"My whole life is spoiled, and you are sorry!"

"I am sorry, I say, that I did not tell you, but that your life is spoiled I cannot and will not believe."

Kitty had risen to her feet.

"I suppose you must go down to dinner," she said quietly. "I shall stay in my own room."

"Yes, dear, stay if you prefer it. I will send your dinner to you." Constance went up to her as she spoke, expecting an embrace. Kitty withdrew.

"Not kiss me, Kitty? Not kiss me?"

"I do not love you, mamma. I feel as if I never could love you again."

Downstairs the brother and sister dined al-

most in silence. Afterwards they walked up and down the terrace path together, and Constance told Richard Amory the whole story.

"What shall I do?" she asked.

"If I were thee," he answered, "I would wait for the prompting of the Spirit."

"Do you consider that I have acted wrongly towards Kitty in any way?"

"Surely not wrongly. But think it over quietly, Constance, and thee will see everything more clearly."

"I am thinking it over. I have been thinking all the time of late."

"Is thee thinking of conquering or of yielding? Is thee thinking of what is best for thee or for Kitty?"

"I believe I can truly say that I am thinking of what is best for Kitty."

"She has been very sweet of late. Sometimes her face has touched me, and her voice has had a peculiar softness."

"Yes, I have been proud of her." Constance, as she spoke, gave a little sigh. "I saw that she was trying to show me she could be brave, — that she respected my wishes and accepted them. But this is different. She no longer trusts me; she imputes heaven only knows what motives to me. She says — she says" — Constance could hardly utter the words — "that she does not love me, — that she almost hates me. My Kitty, — my own little Kitty, would not kiss me."

Her voice was full of anguish. Richard Amory, too, was deeply touched, feeling both for Constance and with Kitty.

"Pity her because she is so young, so ignorant, so miserable," he said. "She is desolate."

"Pity her?" repeated Constance. "What I am longing for at this moment is to hold her in my arms. Only that. It is she that leaves me desolate; not I that would let her suffer a minute."

"Thy Kitty is eighteen years old," said Richard Amory.

"Yes."

"Before she came thee had been thinking of thy child; thee has had her, we will say, almost nineteen years."

"Yes. I had longed for a child. After Philip died I thought, 'Oh, if I had but a child to come and comfort me as some widows have had.' Kitty was the fulfillment of a long hope."

"Did thee nurse her?"

"Yes; I felt I could not resign her to one of those tyrannical Roman nurses. Francesco consented, but his family regarded my fulfillment of a mother's duties as something unheard of, bizarre, American."

"The little soft head on thy breast made thee happy."

"Happy! I often think of it now."

"And her cheek on thine, her smiles and laughter, her grief that thee only could still, her little coos and babbling cries that thee only could interpret,

— they made a part of thy life ; they are a part of thy memory still.”

“ Ah yes. Thee knows, brother, — I can see that thee knows how a mother loves her child ! ”

“ Thee taught her to walk. In all thy life thee was never more pleased than when her little feet learned how to patter along the floor. And no joy, no triumph, was complete unless thee held her close, covered her with kisses, and felt the ardent thrill of the physical life of the little creature. But although this is so large a part of thy experience, Constance, she cannot recall it. She was gathering her strength, but her mental life had not then begun.”

“ You mean that I inevitably love her more than she loves me ! ” Constance exclaimed. “ Of course, in a way ; but she has always been devoted to me — until now.”

“ She has been a loving, dutiful child. My two boys were good, loving, candid little boys. When I look at Darrow I have often a little laugh to myself. At the time he was three years old his mother and I were entertaining some of the Friends who had come to the Yearly Meeting. We were having a sober discourse, which Darrow interrupted by putting questions and making a general disturbance. So I said to him quite sternly, ‘ Go and sit thee down quietly, Darrow. Little boys should be seen and not heard.’ The conversation went on until some refreshments were offered, when the question went up between his mother and me, ‘ Where is

Darrow?' We called 'Darrow, Darrow!' A little voice answered from under the table, and what does thee think, Constance? He came forth stark naked. He had amused himself by unbuttoning all his clothes and putting them in a pile. When Darrow nowadays puts on a certain air, takes a certain tone, offers advice, blames me for this or that omission or commission, I can think of the chubby little figure emerging from under the table. That was my little son; this present Darrow is a fine, stately man, but he is not the child whom I held precious."

"Let us sit down," said Constance. "Thee gives me something to think of."

They sat down on the garden seat.

"Darrow is my second son," Richard Amory pursued. "William came first. He was born in November. One warm day in April, when the grass was beginning to spring fresh and luxuriant, I took my firstborn in my arms, brought him forth from the farm cottage where thee knows we lived until our father died, across the place, took off his little socks, and set him down on his bare feet in the middle of the lawn by the tulip-trees. 'The lines are fallen unto thee in pleasant places,' I said to the crowing baby. 'By God's help this shall be thy goodly heritage.' When I die, and he sells this estate, as he longs to do, the opening of the street will come just where my firstborn son, Richard William Amory, stood, supported by his father's arms."

"Did thee ever tell him the story," inquired Constance.

"Oh yes, I have told him," said Richard Amory. "He says I am a sentimentalist."

They sat silent side by side for a time, then he spoke again.

"The instinct is in thee and in me; it is in all men more or less, but a little more in families which have gone on for years preserving what their fathers bequeathed them. The longing for something permanent, fixed, becomes at last a need. Thee looks up at the hurrying clouds, at the serene stars; thee is so slight, so little powerful; the universe is so great; this little world even so vast in proportion to the narrow circle in which thee lives and moves; the time thee hast to live is so brief, the past is so wonderful, the future so mysterious, yet thee hast had such sweet hopes, such great thoughts; it would be tragically short and useless unless thee felt that thy share in springtime and harvest, sunshine and storm, sunset, sunrise, moonlight and starlight, were to pass on to Kitty. She will have it, she will enjoy it; but what she will most think of will be her own children, — it will be to her as to me and to thee. Is it thy father, thy mother thee thinks of?"

Constance uttered a stifled cry.

"I had no mother. Oh, I have thought to myself I would be to Kitty, not only all I could be of myself, but all that I missed. And now" —

"If I were thee," said Richard Amory, "I would wait for the prompting of the spirit."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ESTRANGEMENT.

FOR some days Kitty continued absolutely estranged from her mother. Constance waited, as her brother had advised, but not so much for the prompting of the Spirit as because she was like a mere straw on the stream. She felt singularly helpless against the fierce current of Kitty's resentment and wounded pride. The young girl did not leave her room for some days, and was treated as if she were ill. She would rise from her bed at noon, and lie listlessly on the lounge gazing out of the window at the tops of the trees against the sky. She was very pale, and Constance could see, when she went to her every two hours, that she wept much in the intervals between her visits. Constance did not sit down. It was evident that her presence made Kitty very restless; and after twenty-four hours had gone by, the young girl looked so fragile it seemed a serious matter to run any risk of exciting her.

Richard Amory alternated with his sister, and carried Kitty grapes from his vines and some splendid peaches from a tree which Kitty had seen in blossom just after she came in the spring. He

would sit beside her, and pare the beautiful luscious fruit, and feed her with slices from the end of his fruit-knife as if she were a child. Thus there was a sound of cheery laughter during his visits.

Haliburton discovered that something was wrong, and he came to the house frequently. One evening as he sat with Richard Amory and his sister, they were talking about the different religions of the world, and how each answers some crying need in the heart of man. While the talk went on, Richard Amory thought he heard Kitty's voice, and he went upstairs to her.

Constance turned to Haliburton and said with a soft vehemence which startled him, —

“ Richard believes that if we restrain our impulses, fix our thoughts on the end, and wait for it, we are safe from anxieties and perturbations of soul ; but what I have felt the past few weeks, and especially the past few days, is that one needs to be very strong, very self-sustained, to need no help while one listens for the Divine Voice. I am not good company for myself nowadays. I have felt more than once as if I should like to kneel down by the side of a confessional and pour all my troubles into some one's ear.”

Haliburton reached out his hand and touched hers.

“ Here am I,” he said.

“ I know you so well ; you also know all about me. It is partly a judge I need, or rather to feel that I am taking counsel not from flesh and blood.”

"Is not a priest flesh and blood?"

"I am not strong; I am very weak; I am led hither and thither by contrary impulses; I need somebody — something to sustain me."

Haliburton could hardly have believed it was Constance speaking. Tears had come to her eyes; there was a half wildness in her tone.

"You need a friend," he said. "Am not I a friend? You could not easily find a friend more faithful than I long to be."

"I could not tell everything to you as I could tell it to a priest, whose vocation it is to listen and advise."

"You shall find me as safe as a priest. A priest is certain to have listened with more or less indifference to plenty of confessions from women who have only too much to confess. He could not know you as I know you; he could not believe in you as I believe in you; I long to say he could not help you as I could help you. For no man on earth — I dare say it, I *will* say it, Constance — has ever loved you as I love you."

She shrank from him slightly; the blood had rushed to her face. He went on, "I only say this to show you where I stand. Unless you love me, and are ready to accept me as your husband, my wish to have you for my wife is nothing. I only want you to know that all my service is yours unalterably. I wish it could be the easiest and pleasantest thing in the world for you to turn to me and tell me everything."

"You cannot help me. The priest could not help me. Only Kitty can help me, and she will not."

"Is the trouble still about Glen?" Haliburton asked.

"It has taken a new shape," said Constance. She had not until this moment looked fully into his face; but now as he spoke, encountering his straight glance, she gave a sort of sigh, and said, "It is not hard to tell you everything, you are so kind." She leaned forward and laid her hand on his arm. "Kitty is angry with me," she said faintly, her whole face quivering with emotion. "It is clear that she has grown absolutely to dislike me. When I go into her room, she turns so pale I have more than once feared that she was on the verge of fainting."

"Is it because you have separated her from Glen?"

"That she accepted, or seemed to accept. No; somebody has told her that Glen once cared for me."

"She is jealous?"

"Oh, I would not—I could not think she would be jealous. She feels that I ought to have confided in her; that I ought to have prepared her for the situation; told her that between her and Glen existed this obstacle of an old, foolish affection. She thinks I have treated her as a child. She also accuses me of heartlessness, that I did not marry poor Glen twelve years ago. The want of logic, the absurdity of it all, the odd jumble of

past and present, the passing sentence with absolute condemnation on what happened long before she had any knowledge of things, would make one smile, except — except that they go to show that in her mind there is an intense resentment against me. In Kitty's mind! Do you understand, Mr. Haliburton, my Kitty — my own little Kitty — will not kiss me; if I reach out my hand, she draws hers away shudderingly."

As she spoke her clasp tightened on Haliburton's arm. It was easy for him to see that she was suffering acutely. He did not speak for the moment, and she went on: —

"She says I have spoiled her life."

Haliburton uttered an exclamation.

"That is youth," he said.

"Yes, it is youth; but what I intended was that Kitty should be saved that sort of heartbreak. It really did seem that by keeping her close to me, sharing everything I did and said and thought with her, she would take life logically and rationally."

"But did you tell her everything?" demanded Haliburton.

"Everything."

"You did not tell her that Glen had been in love with you all these years, — not that."

"If I did not tell her that, it was because it was too" — She finished her sentence with a little gesture suggestive almost of disdain.

"It was too personal, too intimate," said Hali-

burton. "It was your life, or a part of it, — and it is not so easy a matter to share the deep thoughts of our lives with any one."

"It is largely a matter of taste," said Constance. "I had not felt that she was sufficiently grown up to be told of love affairs. When should I have told her? When we left Fiesole, — on the voyage, — after we arrived here? She was the merest child."

"But eager, inquisitive, ardent, bent on acquisition, — she must climb to the top of trees; she must study out everything that is new, whether a bird, or a flower, or an unexpected phrase. You would not have expected her to halt on the threshold and not explore what is actually the one reality of human life, — the falling in love with what touches the heart?"

"She did not know what sentiment was, except as she felt it for me, — for her uncle, — for everything that was beautiful. I remember the day she came home after a talk with Gatty Darrow, when the two had discussed the necessity of having some great distinguishing passion."

"It is only the first step that counts. She had acquired the phrase."

"Do you remember the night we dined with you? We all pampered her appetite and let her eat half a dozen dishes of ice cream and strawberries. She had looked so pretty, as she moved about at the table, so rather womanly, that it was reassuring to see what a greedy child she actually was."

"I remember that night," said Haliburton; but what he remembered chiefly was that on that memorable night he had felt it his duty — a point of conscience and of honor — to urge Constance to marry Glen.

"But I think," Constance went on dreamily, "that it all began that night. She and Glen went out together to see the shower come up. He was ill for a week afterwards, and all that time she was in a fever. It did not suggest anything to me except her longing to do something for a friend who was ill. Now I see." She sighed. She had withdrawn her hand from Haliburton's arm, and, sitting back in her chair, leaned against the cushions, closing her eyes.

Haliburton studied the pale face. He knew that she was working out a long equation; her one object, her one thought, being to have x equal y ; and Haliburton knew, or believed that he knew, that x is irrevocably x , and that y has its own potentialities, and no more.

Richard Amory came tiptoeing down in another moment. He said that Kitty was asleep; that he thought she was brighter, and that the following day she would see everything in a different light.

"I told her," Richard Amory went on, "that this was a house in which life had been going on for many generations. Birth, marriage, death, — birth, marriage, death, — one had succeeded the other, each bringing along in its train much sorrow, much necessity for endurance, some joy, but none

unalloyed. I told her that these events had come to pass one after the other ; so long as human beings peopled the earth they must always come to pass. But I told her, too, that never within my knowledge had any one in suffering done as she was doing now, — separating herself from the loving, longing hearts close beside her, belonging to her, her nearest and dearest, longing to comfort and to soothe her.”

Constance put out her hand and clasped her brother's. “I thank thee, Richard,” she said.

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CHAPTER XXII.

HALIBURTON FINDS HIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE days were so long, so dull to Kitty. Nothing happened; nothing ever could happen again. Life had stopped; the mainspring of the mechanism was broken. Let the hands on the dial-face travel round as they might; let the sun rise in the east, climb to the meridian, decline to the west, and give way to let the moon and stars shine forth in his place; yet everything in the universe stood stock-still.

It was not that Glen had vanished out of her life. It was not that the transport of loving him and believing herself to be loved by him was flatly over and done with. It was not that the old rapture and belief in her mother's feeling could never be rekindled. It was that she suddenly saw with new eyes, heard with new ears, realized the emptiness of things, the great, gaping void between what she craved and the reality offered in its place.

Kitty's eternity of despair lasted six days. It was then that her uncle had spoken to her quietly, saying finally, —

“When we think only of our individual rights and forget duty, thee sees, Kitty, life is full of complexity.”

Next day, Kitty rose, dressed, and resumed her old habits in the house. Morning and evening she kissed her mother, and gave her cheek to her uncle, but there was none of the old clasping of hands, the old clinging of cheek to cheek. She talked, but without ardor or spontaneity. She had grown thin to meagreness in the interval, and was still very weak.

Constance used all her woman's wit to meet her child just at the point where she was needed, but her heart almost failed her. It seemed sometimes as if she and her child could never meet again in comradeship and trust. She detected in all Kitty said the ring of an irony which was the result of long, hard thought over her own problems.

Yet Kitty was struggling to crush herself into conformity with what was expected of her. When her uncle came in to breakfast with his hands full of anemones and cosmos flowers, and told about the new chrysanthemums which he had called the *Constantia* and the *Caterina*, she tried to seem interested. In old days, every fact connected with growing things had been curiously important to her. Now, she had an angry wish to say, —

“That is what I should do, — live in a six-inch flower-pot, absorb all the nourishment which is given me, and fulfill my destiny by taking a prize at a show. But I am not a vegetable.”

That she did not say this was because she put a curb upon herself. When her mother proposed amusements, diversions, she longed to exclaim, —

"I am a child to be taken to see shows, to visit other children, and play games!"

What she was always saying to herself nowadays was that her mother considered her a child, incapable of anything beyond a child's apprehension. If Constance addressed a general observation to her, particularly if she alluded to anything that was the result of her experience, Kitty said to herself, —

"She is cased round with formulas; she can live, breathe, and think by rote."

If Constance studied how to please her daughter, Kitty's thought was, —

"She wants me to be happy, but she expects me to be happy in her way."

Even the dogs irritated her when they came running towards her, fawning, crouching, and inviting her to run races as of old. It showed her how light-hearted she had been on first coming to Waldstein. She had been then just such another animal as Kaiser or Khan, obeying at a call, accepting gratefully the least word or glance flung at him; stanch, loyal, and devoted, ready to lay down his life in eager service.

Yes, Kitty mused, she had been reared to think always first of others; to find happiness in making others happy. It had been her mother's creed: nothing done for self could give any satisfying measure of reward. Happiness lies in self-forgetfulness, in renunciation.

And what, Kitty argued, had it all come to?

Everybody had accepted what she gave so generously, and had made light of what was her very life of life. "Is it worth while to go on thinking chiefly of others?" she now asked herself after this experience of being kissed and betrayed. She could not endure to think of Glen. One day when she lay in bed, finding the upper story deserted for a brief space, she had risen, crept to the bookcase in her mother's room, and taken out the little volume, "Love Unfulfilled." She had read no more than twenty lines; but they had dazzled her as if by a flash of lightning. They showed what Glen's love could be. They startled her consciousness, alarmed her, arrested her on the threshold of love, as it were. She not only could not cross it, but she hated the idea of crossing it. Certain fiery, unforgettable words in one of the sonnets ran in her head like a persistent strain of music. She hated them.

Yes, there was the sting of it, — she was a child; she had accepted phrases, falling into her mother's pretty fictions. It was her mother who had dwarfed all effort and experience in order to keep her a child.

One day, about the first of October, Constance happened to come upon Kitty as she sat brooding over thoughts like these before the great open fire in the hall. Constance's keen mother feeling had been growing more tender and more poignant day by day, but she had waited. Now, as she caught the look in Kitty's eyes as she turned, — the instinct

of an ambushed creature longing for escape, — she advanced, sat down beside Kitty on the great carved oak settle, and said softly, —

“Kitty, I cannot have you so cheerless, so unhappy. I am going to send for Glen.”

Kitty gave her one woeful glance, then burst into unmeasured weeping.

“That is what you wish? Tell me that you wish it,” said Constance.

“No, no, no,” cried Kitty fiercely. “I wish never, never to see him again.”

She began to sob convulsively; but when Constance encircled her with her arms the girl yielded as if with intense relief, and presently lay clasped tightly to her mother’s breast.

“My child,” said Constance after a time, “tell me what I am to do. Anything you ask for you shall have. Glen is not my choice for you, — he never could be my choice, — but I give up any wishes of my own. You shall marry him rather than go on in this desolate, weary way.”

Kitty lifted her head and looked at her mother with a world of resistance and revolt in her eyes.

“I will not rob you of Glen, mamma. Glen is yours, — yours only.”

Again Constance detected that ring of irony, — the result of long, persistent anger.

“Glen has never been anything but a cousin, a brother to me,” Constance replied; “he never will be anything else, except as you give him a closer tie.”

"Do not talk to me of Glen," cried Kitty, with intense feeling. "He never cared for me. I know for whom he cared. I have read his book."

Constance looked at Kitty with suffering, not only for herself but with a sympathy for Kitty's suffering.

"If you had given me that book to read, mamma," said Kitty; "if you had warned me!"

"That book is not for a child," Constance replied calmly. "I hardly think it is for a woman. I have read little of it myself. I never saw it until this summer, when I came upon a copy of it in your uncle's library. To me, it is incomprehensible, besides being foolish. Glen is probably more ashamed of it than I am. Whatever it represents was over and done with long ago. Kitty, darling, let all that pass. They say that in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. When one is only eighteen such a heaven is attainable on earth. Life is before you. It is beautiful out of doors. Let us take the dogs and go after chestnuts."

There was just a suggestion of humor in Constance's look and manner. A great sob rose in Kitty, but these close caresses had carried her back to the feeling of warm, intimate life. Something that had been checked began to move again. Here was her mother's face, beautiful, clear, and loving; the lips so tender, the eyes so soft. Even while she told herself that she was solitary, loveless, that an irredeemable wrong had been done her, she was

once more swayed by her mother's just and accurate good sense.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, again clinging closely, "I do not care about Glen. I do not care about anything. I do not know what is to become of me. I feel so dead."

"I know. It seems to me sometimes as if you were only the ghost of my little Kitty. Oh, to have you happy again!"

"I do not want to be happy. I want only the feeling that I am alive, — that I have something to do."

"Come out into the sunshine," said Constance; and Kitty permitted herself to be persuaded. But when they had crossed the lawn with the dogs running gladly before them, and entered the woods where autumn had come thinning the foliage but enriching every leaf that remained with some tint of beautiful color, Kitty could not help recalling every word, every incident of her last walk here with Agatha. Again that dreadful feeling came over her of what she had suffered, — what she had lost. Everything that was past asserted itself; she pulsed and palpitated and clung to her mother helplessly. But she fought against her weakness resolutely, and presently was calm.

"Oh, Kitty, Kitty," said Constance. "I did so want to spare you all this."

"I do not want to be spared."

"It is something to be young, to make mistakes, and yet to feel that they are not irreparable; still it is better not to lose time by making mistakes."

"I want to make mistakes," said Kitty. "I want to go on and learn for myself by hard experience. You tried to save me from everything. You kept me a mere child, knowing nothing, understanding nothing."

"You were a happy child, dear. I wanted you to go on being happy."

"You want me to be happy your way, mamma. If I am to be happy it must be my way. It's my brain, my nerves, my heart, my eyes, my ears I have to live by, not yours. I cannot go on taking your ideas at second-hand. I did so as long as I could, and it has made me perfectly miserable." Then her harshness, injustice, unreason, became apparent even to herself as she saw the sorrow in her mother's face. "Oh, mamma," she cried, dropping into contrition, "forgive me for being cruel."

Constance, however, was glad of any outburst which gave her a chance of insight into what was behind the general rebellion and revolt in the young girl's mind. It was an unmanageable idea that Kitty no longer cared for Glen. Constance was more ready to believe that the passionate stirring of feeling had gone far deeper than she had at first believed. In spite of the seeming complexity of many human motives there is apt to be some very simple, some elementary need behind them all.

Agatha Darrow had set out to pay Kitty a visit, and they encountered her, and, a little farther on, John Haliburton. The four naturally divided into

pairs, Kitty and Agatha leading the way, and the elders following.

Haliburton looked at Constance closely.

"You are a little lighter-hearted to-day," he said.

"Yes, it was something that Kitty consented to come out with me."

"It will all turn out right."

"Kitty will live down this state of mind. It is like a grief,—it spends itself and is spent. But I shall not have my happy little girl back again," said Constance.

"That exists in the nature of things," said Haliburton. "She is eighteen years old. She cannot be a happy little girl again. What you want is to have her a happy woman."

Haliburton had received a letter from Glen that morning, and had come out early from town in order to consult Constance. Glen's employers had decided to send him to London on a matter of business connected with some English copyrights, and to settle the question about certain illustrations for a book. Haliburton was to take the four o'clock train to New York in order to catch a last glimpse of Glen before he sailed on the following day at ten o'clock.

Constance uttered an exclamation.

"That settles the question," she murmured.

"What question?"

"I have thought of writing and telling Glen to come back to see Kitty."

"Do you mean that you give your consent to his marrying her?" asked Haliburton much perturbed.

Constance gave him an account of her talk with Kitty; told him how the young girl had declared that she wished never to see Glen again.

"But it does not make me believe that she no longer cares for him," Constance added; "rather the reverse."

Haliburton looked at Constance intently.

"She is jealous of you," he said.

"But that is folly."

"I have been in love, and I know that one may be jealous even of a caress given to a dog. In this case Kitty might readily be jealous of a feeling that has existed so long, that in a way has been made fixed and durable. Has she read those sonnets?"

"Unluckily, yes."

"Ah!" Haliburton gave Constance a side glance as they walked on.

"I told her that to me they were both foolish and incomprehensible," she said, with some constraint; "that is, so far as I could bring myself to read them."

"Still" — Haliburton began, then hesitated.

"Still what?"

"Their incomprehensibility and folly might make her believe all the more powerfully in their meaning. If you and she were on equal terms" —

"But are we not?"

"Far from it. You are older, more experienced. Above all, you are not in love with Glen, and I hope Kitty is. But you being just what you are, it is as hard for her to believe that, after having given his love to you, Glen could love her as it is for me to believe that" —

He did not finish, and she gave him a questioning look.

"Surely you understand me," he said, coloring deeply.

"Not quite."

"I mean that when I reflect that Glen has loved you in vain, there seems no sort of hope for a dull fellow like me."

Her lips opened as if to speak. A new feeling shone in her eyes; she blushed, and had the air of suddenly experiencing the conviction of a fact which she had never before accepted.

"Do not speak of love," she said, after a little pause. "If you could realize how I value your friendship, how I feel your support, how I — in fact — how it has comforted me in these lonely days to think that you — that any one" — He saw that her eyes were suffused with tears. "You see," she went on after a struggle for self-control, "you see I have lost faith in myself. I seem no longer to have any belief in my own judgment. I knew before that at critical periods in my life I had made mistakes. Twice I married, failing wholly to understand my own needs, my own duty, without counting the cost of marriage. Twice I

have had to fight with the remorse a woman feels for the dead for whom she might have done much, but for whom she can do no more."

As she spoke, Haliburton laid his hand on her arm. "I am certain," he said in an agitated voice, "that all your life long you have made every individual person who had the joy of being near you perfectly happy."

"You are very good to say so," Constance returned, and as she looked up at him there was a half smile on her lips. "At any rate, whatever my sins had been, I meant to make no mistakes with Kitty. I intended to foresee everything, to provide for everything."

"In short, be omniscient and omnipotent," said Haliburton. "But then it was never intended we should be omniscient and omnipotent. The truth is, you felt that Kitty was wax in your hands to be modeled into just the sort of being you yourself are. Whereas, she is only half your child; she has a separate character, a separate temperament which has to be taken into account."

"I have said that to myself of late. Her father had a much more persistent and passionate will than I have. In the least conflict of opinion it was my habit to give up to him on the instant. Of late, when I have found myself on the point of surrendering to Kitty, I have" —

Constance broke off and sighed, yet smiled as she pointed towards the two girls some distance in front, who had seated themselves on top of the

stile, and were talking with animation. The wind played softly through the rosy maples and the yellow chestnuts, and scattered now and then a leaf. The dogs were lying on the ground, looking up wistfully while they waited.

"If you really wish to have Glen come on," said Haliburton, "he would be glad enough to fling business to the winds and come."

"No, he must not fling business to the winds," said Constance.

"He says he felt at first on going away as a cabbage feels when pulled up out of its quiet, comfortable cabbage-garden," said Haliburton. "But he is getting used to it."

"There is everything in getting used to it," returned Constance. "At this moment even Kitty seems happy. No, we will not spoil Glen's great chance. I only felt so sure that one word from him, even a look, would convince Kitty that she has no need to be jealous of me." She gave a half bitter little laugh.

"Constance," said Haliburton in a low voice.

She raised her eyes. In his face was the expression of all that had lain vibrating so long in the man's inmost soul.

"Marry me," he said. "It will end all Kitty's mistakes, — all poor Glen's, too, if you will marry me."

She dropped her eyes, smiled, blushed, and shook her head.

"You know it is impossible," she murmured.

"I know nothing of the sort."

"I shall have to teach you, then, its absolute impracticability."

"You could not. I could help you, — even in this matter more than you think."

"Oh, I know that you can always help me, Mr. Haliburton." She smiled as she spoke. Still he did not feel encouraged to go on. All he said was, —

"You still call me Mr. Haliburton."

"You never told me to call you anything else," she replied, with some archness.

"Do you know the reason? If you were to call me plain John, I actually believe I should go mad with happiness."

At least he had had his say. He no longer needed to reproach himself by the warning, "He who abstains is taken at his word."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RED FLAG.

THE four walked on together for the rest of the way. But when Constance and Kitty were left alone together it was clear that the latter had carried away an abundance of ideas from her talk with Agatha. Agatha had confided to Kitty that she was eating her heart out with longing for something to do, — something to be. No declaration could have struck a more responsive chord. Kitty had been eating her own heart out. But Agatha, when she had a little fight with Fate, was not likely to yield without getting at least a part of what she wanted. To her, life was an experience to be dealt with experimentally. Kitty also wished to experiment.

She told her mother that she should like to be a nurse, — Agatha had almost decided to be a nurse; the best object in life surely was to try to diminish human pain, and to study how to do this scientifically and effectively seemed the best sort of practical effort. The trouble was that she and Agatha longed to do something together, and Kitty was far too young to be accepted at a training-school. To wait all those years before she reached

the required standard was, however, impossible. How impatient she and Gatty were at all the petty restrictions put in the way of heroic effort. They could, of course, understand the consistency of applying certain rules to average cases, but still there ought to be some loophole made for individual needs and aspirations, like Kitty's, for example.

Kitty looked at her mother for sympathy.

"You would like to have me a nurse, mamma?"

"Oh, my darling! It is a very hard life, — but still it is a very noble life, and I should admire you, I should feel proud of you, if you could enter on it and persist in it. Nevertheless, it seems to be out of the question for some years to come."

The very suggestion of an avenue of escape from the daily routine which had oppressed and deadened her had given Kitty a look of animation. Her voice was sweet and sympathetic again; her step elastic; her eyes had lost their heavy, melancholy, troubled brightness; her lips had renewed their vermilion. It was Kitty once more, — not a suffering woman; and Constance could only feel grateful for the change. For three or four days inquiries were pushed as to the age restrictions at the training-schools. Kitty said twenty times a day, "Oh, if I were but ten years older." She and Agatha were constantly together, the latter talking with an impassioned rapidity, while Kitty found ample breathing room in Agatha's enthusiasm. Life seemed easy again, its meaning clear, while, with senses all a-quiver, Kitty drank in

Agatha's fluent discourses. And this burning desire for some sort of individual effort carried Kitty through the next two weeks.

She set to work with her brush and paints, occupying herself with them day after day, with some evident clear intention which Constance did not at first understand, but was ready to sympathize with. When Kitty brought her mother half a dozen pretty little fancies, — a branch of apple-blossoms straggling across the canvas, a group of cosmos flowers against a vivid blue sky, a spray of pink roses bent with its weight of raindrops from a passing shower, a choice of applied ideas from Japanese art possessing attractive color and some charm of sentiment, — Constance was frankly delighted.

"I remember, mamma," said Kitty, "you used to say it was better to do nothing than to commit absurdities. I thought it was better to commit absurdities than to do nothing."

"But these are not absurd, — they are actually very nice indeed. I shall love to have them prettily framed and hung up."

She detected a certain wistfulness in Kitty's look.

"Do you think, mamma," she asked, "that anybody would be likely to buy them?"

"Buy them? I will buy them if you wish to sell them."

"Oh, I do not mean that. It is not merely a question of money. I should like to earn money,

but it would be chiefly because it proved that what I did possessed some value, — that I am not an inferior or commonplace artist."

"Ah, when one's little pigs stay at home they are the cleverest little pigs in the world, but the moment one takes them to market there are so many others cleverer, one's own little pigs have so slight a chance."

But even while she spoke the face she was looking at grew scarlet, and, before she had finished her speech, tears gained the mastery. The young girl snatched the pictures and would have torn them across if Constance had not been too quick for her.

"Surely, Kitty dear," she said, "you are not so sensitive but that I may have my little joke."

"Ah, you may like to joke, but it is death to me."

"I said, I still say, it is a charming talent this of yours."

"But only amateur talent," Kitty said, with a bitterness which made itself felt.

"What are you but an amateur?" Constance said, with perfect serenity. "You were such a bright, clever, little girl I used to say to myself, 'My Kitty will be a genius.' I suppose mothers will never get over the hope and belief that they have brought a shining genius into the world. At that time I used to take you to the Uffizi and Pitti galleries to see the great pictures and statues, and you know I still keep the models and sketches you made after them. I sent for masters, but

somehow, although they said you had a certain clever trick, — really quite a good deal of talent, — the spark of genius did not show itself. So I did not let you make too much of your work, for a half talent is so terribly disappointing. It is just as well to draw the line sharply; to be thankful that genius does exist, to say to one's self it is enough that other people have genius."

"It is not enough to me that other people have genius," answered Kitty. "It is not enough to me that you decide that I am a child, — that I know nothing, feel nothing, must be always led about. If I am to wait for your decision, I shall never do anything, — never be anything. If, as a little girl, I had even the least show of talent, I am certain that, as a woman, I have ten times that amount. You may laugh as you like, mamma, about taking my drawings to market, but I do believe I could earn my living by them."

"But you do not need to earn your living. We are not rich, but we have a little money very safely and well invested. You shall study and work all you like; you shall develop so much genius that you can put me wholly in the wrong. You can" —

"Can I go to Paris with Gatty and study art, mamma?" demanded Kitty, her eyes sparkling.

"Go to Paris and study? With Gatty?" Constance repeated, as if dazed.

"That is what we want to do," said Kitty. "Take a little apartment, keep house, and work at one of the large studios."

All Kitty's brightest self was in her look; all the old charm, zest, appetite, had come back to her life along with this new hope, — that was clear.

"Do you mean," inquired Constance, "that I am to go with you?"

"Oh no, mamma, only Gatty and I. That is half the fun of it that we are to go just by ourselves."

"Can it be that you mean you wish to go away and leave me alone?"

"You would have uncle Richard and — and — all the friends."

Constance could feel the blood rushing to her heart, which beat heavily and unevenly.

"Oh, Kitty," she faltered tremulously, "oh, Kitty, you hurt me."

The two looked at each other for a moment in silence. What Constance saw in Kitty's face was the answer, "But, mamma, you hurt me." She understood — she could not help understanding — that planted between her and her child was her offense, — still unforgiven. She almost felt that Kitty longed to make her expiate it; that this scheme was a part of her appointed punishment.

Kitty remained silent, but it was a silence in which she was gathering her strength, then she burst out, —

"I cannot stay here, mamma. It is impossible for me to stay here. I want some life of my own."

"A life of your own?"

"I mean I want something to do. I have courage and force within me ; I want to spend them in work ; I long to achieve something. This easy, comfortable life which brings me no opportunity to use my powers has become intolerable."

Constance continued to look at Kitty with an expression of pain and bewilderment. So many thoughts and sensations in her mind rushed together at once they jostled each other, and only confused beginnings of sentences occurred to her. She could have burst out with reproaches, sarcasms, angry remonstrances, for the mere suggestion of this scheme was an outrage upon her rights, her own dignity. But what were her own rights, her own dignity, when Kitty asked for anything ? She might have denounced the whole enterprise as hysterical, — the mere stirring of youthful insubordination, the love of movement, — the craving for notoriety. Her taste, her whole womanly instinct, rejected the idea of having her child rushing round the world in search of adventures. But yet she was able sufficiently to analyze her intense antagonism ; to confess to herself that what went to her heart like a knife was the fact that Kitty had withdrawn wholly from her influence, had surrendered herself to others ; that Kitty found her companionship irksome, — wished to go away from her.

What Constance finally said was, —

"But who will take care of you ?"

Kitty gave a little laugh. "Oh, mamma, that is

where you make such a mistake about me. You think I am a foolish child, but really I am not a child. You were married when you were only a few months older than I am now. You were left a widow and went on living in Italy all by yourself until you married papa."

"I had no mother. My father had died. I had no home here."

"My having had you so long has taught me all the better to take care of myself now. I shall soon be nineteen. I am sure I feel as if I were thirty-nine. And, in any case, Gatty is older, — she will be twenty-five in a few weeks."

Constance remained silent, and Kitty began to give her all the details of the enterprise. All was apparently arranged with a skill and assurance which seemed to have foreseen every difficulty and provided for each emergency. Gatty had found out what a little suite of four or five rooms would cost; she knew of a sensible French maid whom they could have at so many francs a week, — who was a clever cook, understood the markets, and could do all the work in the *appartement*, with some occasional help from a *frotteur*. This sudden grip upon the practical details of life filled Constance with a hopeless pang of admiration. Was this her little Kitty whose ideas took shape with such admirable lucidity? The little parade of economy, the self-abnegation exhibited in dispensing with whatever they did not care for, — that is, the mere necessities of life, being able thus to

concentrate themselves on the luxuries, — would have raised a smile at any other time. The little flaunt of Bohemianism in Kitty's saying, "We shall not need any clothes except blouses and serge skirts; we shall not go into society at all, and society will not come near us; we wish to know nothing and care for nothing except art," had its own flavor of absurdity; but Constance was too terribly in earnest to find anything amusing in the situation.

"Of course," Kitty went on, "unless women are artists this sort of a life would be impracticable; but we intend to throw ourselves into it heart and soul and mind and strength."

"Have you asked Mrs. Darrow's consent?" Constance now inquired.

"Oh, Mrs. Darrow quite approves," Kitty made haste to answer. "She has not only given her consent to Gatty's going, but she encourages it. She offered to break the matter to you. I was not sure that I was brave enough." The girl laughed rather tremulously.

"You knew I could not approve; you must understand now that I am utterly opposed to the scheme. It seems to me it would be absolutely wrong to give my consent to it." Constance spoke with intense feeling and resolution in her voice.

"I remember, mamma," murmured Kitty, growing pale to the lips, "that you said you would do anything to make me happy. And this is all I ask for. I think you owe me this compensation."

"Let us be frank, Kitty; let us not deal in phrases. I owe you compensation for what?"

Kitty shook like a leaf. For a moment she found it hard to speak, then she whispered, —

"For robbing me of all I cared for in life."

"Do you mean Glen?"

"I mean my belief in Glen, — my feeling that he cared for me just as I cared for him. He belonged to you, — all the time he belonged to you; he only pretended to be interested in me because I thrust myself upon him."

"If I were to prove to you that Glen never really cared for me; that it was a mere flash of youthful, poetic fervor; if he were to come to you — to tell you" —

"I wish never to see him again," cried Kitty. "I hate myself when I think of him; I feel how childish, how silly I was. I do not blame him; I do not blame you except, that is, for not telling me in time; I only blame myself. Let all that go, mamma; it is over. I do not suppose I really loved him, — perhaps, as you said once, it was my trick of idealizing everything and everybody. But it seems to me that I did love him — only — you came in between. He could n't love me after loving you. I know you too well for that; I know him too well for that; and I know myself too well to feel that I am worth his loving me. I also know myself so well that I would n't let him take me out of pity. And I hate the idea of love; I hate the thought that I am a flesh-and-blood body that has

any need of love. What saves me is the knowledge that I have a brain and soul, and that in that brain and soul there is help for me if I can have the life I need."

"But, Kitty," Constance said in an agony of tenderness, —

"But what, mamma?"

"This instinct that you may choose for yourself; shake off the harness of custom, of duty; claim your share of the pleasure and" —

Kitty interrupted her. "It is not pleasure I want. And what duty have I that I am not fulfilling in doing the best I can with my faculties and powers?"

"No duty to me?"

"You cannot sympathize with me, mamma; you are an admirable mechanism; you are beautifully wound up; but you cannot leap out of your own system of cogs and wheels. You will have to go round and round in the same old way. I suppose it is because you were born a Quaker." Kitty laughed as she spoke, and her manner gave her words an archness which in part robbed them of their sting. Still, Kitty saw that her mother flushed crimson, and that she evidently suppressed the rejoinder which flashed in her eyes, even if it did not come to her lips. After a moment's pause, Constance said, —

"I will not dogmatize on the subject."

"I think you may trust me," Kitty said, with some stateliness. "You wish, you have always

said, to make me happy, and this is all I ask for. I suppose I may ask for a little money — at first. Afterwards I hope, — but, perhaps, my hopes are only fit to smile at. No matter; if I cannot make my own living I can starve. That is what Gatty says, — to starve to death is hard, but not half so hard as to be wearied and bored to death.” Then, at the expression on her mother’s face, Kitty’s mood melted a little. She drew nearer Constance.

“ At least, mamma,” she said in a broken voice, “ it will be safety and peace. There was a long time when I wanted to die. I thought of the ‘ *Implora pace* ’ on the old tombs at home. But this also will be peace, — peace and hope, — the peace and hope of a different life.”

As she spoke, she clasped her arms about Constance, who was shaken, feeling herself at the mercy of a power against which she could not contend.

CHAPTER XXIV.

YOUTH AND ART.

HAVING flung their flag to the breeze, Gatty's and Kitty's preparations went on apace.

Constance had not yielded at once. She had talked with Ambury Darrow and his wife.

"Oh, let her go," said Ambury. "They will do no harm, and they may find out their folly. I am thankful to have two of my girls stick by me. This present generation is a little cracked, I fear. They have taken cold, and their measles has been driven in and has gone to the head."

Mrs. Darrow was unhesitatingly fluent, as usual ; dogmatic and sentimental at once ; these two beautiful, buoyant young souls demanded but one simple right, — that of enlarging their lives, putting aside the claims of family, and living for art.

Richard Amory said that Ambury's wife always reminded him of the free-thinker at whom Dr. Johnson thundered, — "Friend, thee is a bigot to laxness."

But Richard Amory himself advised Constance to yield.

"Thee will find that thee will never regret that thee thyself makes the sacrifice," he said. "What robs us is the sacrifice we impose."

"That is what I feel, — that I ought not, just for her soul's good, to let Kitty carry out what is only an egotistical freak of Agatha's," said Constance.

"Thee speaks as if thee could govern facts, — as if thee could say to the rising tide, 'Thus far and no farther.'"

Then, presently, he added, "Thee must remember, Constance, what Seneca says: 'Many travel for pleasure to that city to which thou art banished;' many mothers fit out their daughters gladly to go to Paris. Thee has said constantly that Kitty's education was not complete; that thee must send her to school, — perhaps even to college. Let us say to ourselves, 'She is finishing at Paris, — she is acquiring the accent.'"

"She speaks French like a Parisian already," Constance pleaded.

"Thee has not learned the pang of philosophy," said Richard Amory. "Thee finds the logical *must* too hard. Philosophy will give thee an incontrovertible argument for accepting what thee cannot help."

What Haliburton said was, "Poor Constance; appointed to love and to suffer."

"I am not sure that it is not my pride that suffers most," Constance rejoined. "I am a dreadfully proud woman, and this humiliates me."

"Poor Constance!"

"Mrs. Darrow triumphs over me. She tells me she always saw that I was bringing Kitty up,

not according to her needs, but according to my wishes."

"I know she takes the detestable contemporary tone, but no matter."

"Of all the evil things that could have happened to me," Constance went on, "I should least have expected to give Kitty over to such an influence as Agatha Darrow's. They talk about a life of sacrifice, strict industry, full of study and mental expansion; but all the time they are thinking of how delightful it will be to have no duties, no restrictions, nothing but enjoyment. But, after all, that is not the point."

"The real point is," said Haliburton, "that you are giving up your Kitty."

"Exactly." Constance smiled and sighed. "I think of nothing else. My brain wearies itself out in going over and over the thought of what Kitty will do without me. I cannot put my state of mind into words; I am so utterly broken up by forecasts, imaginations, terrors. You see she has always slept in a little bed in the room next to mine. I have looked at her after she has fallen asleep. I" —

Haliburton took her hand.

"You would like to go with her, — watch over her?"

"Yes." Constance made this confession with a feeling of shame, of contrition. "You cannot think how terrible the wretch is."

"Could you not go?" he asked, with some visible effort.

"She does not want me. She repudiates the idea that she could possibly have any need of me."

Haliburton could not have pushed any claims of his own at such a moment. He may have felt, however, some of the magnanimity of a man who sees that fate is doing for him what he could not have done for himself. Still, Haliburton perhaps thought he could assist fate a little.

Agatha and Kitty were to sail in the French steamer on the 22d of October. They were to cross with the Willoughbys, who were connections, and were glad to look after the young art students. Indeed, since Mrs. Willoughby was to spend a year in Paris, this suggestion of chaperonage was to Constance something to be grateful for. It so fell out that Haliburton had received word from Glen Rennie that he was to sail from Southampton for New York on the 26th of October.

When Haliburton mentioned this to Constance, she exclaimed, —

"‘Ships that pass in the night.’ It had occurred to me that if Glen only knew" —

"Knew that Kitty was going to Paris, he would prevent it?"

"Something of the sort has passed through my mind. I have felt the need of Glen of late. If I could talk over the whole subject of Kitty with him. If I could discuss the whole matter with him pro and con" —

"The matter of his marrying Kitty?"

Constance made a little gesture of deprecation.

"I say simply discuss the whole matter. I have no settled theory. Sometimes for half an hour I can bring myself to see over and beyond all this present turmoil of feeling. It seems, then, as if possibly all this might turn out for the best. Kitty says she does not love Glen any more, — wishes never to see him again" —

"But she does love him, nevertheless," said Haliburton, with feeling. "To see him again would set the world right for her."

"Tell me why you think so," Constance murmured.

"When Glen went away from here in September, he asked me not to let Kitty forget him. I said to her yesterday that I often wrote to Glen, and that he would be so glad of a message."

"What did she say?"

"It was not so much what she said as the way she looked. She asked timidly, 'How is he?' I told her he had been wonderfully well of late. I told her he was in London. She was evidently greatly surprised. 'In London?' she repeated."

Constance interrupted: "I expected to have told her of his going to London; I inquired of her whether she wished to hear about Glen's movements, and she said no; she preferred to know nothing about him."

"Perverse, foolish little girl that she is!" Haliburton said; then went on: "I informed her that he was to sail for home four days after she took the steamer for Havre, and for a moment she gazed

at me breathless, and seemed about to speak impulsively; then, after reflecting, she said, 'Is it possible?' No more, no less. 'Is it possible?'"

"And that made it clear to you that she is still in love with Glen?" Constance asked.

"Quite clear."

"Well," said Constance, "I admit that I agree with you. Still, if she takes up a new life, with new aims and motives, new industries, new acquaintances, it is not improbable that all this early feeling may pass away and leave no trace."

"I hope not," said Haliburton. "Constance, I want you to let her marry Glen."

"Yes, I think you do. It has influenced me a little. Still, Teddy Darrow is, I fancy, a better choice for her."

"Teddy Darrow," Haliburton exclaimed almost with wrath. "He will make a good lawyer no doubt,—he might even make Kitty a good husband, but"—

"You want her to marry Glen."

"I want to see Glen settled and happy."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WAY OF A MAID.

STRANGE to relate, when Kitty came down the gang-plank at Havre she could not help looking to the right and left, as if she expected some one to meet her. And yet she knew very well that Glendenning Rennie was to sail on the 26th, and that they must in a way have passed each other on the ocean two days before. Still, why had Mr. Haliburton whispered to her, as he bade her good-by on the steamer a week and a day before, "If you see Glen, be a little good to him, Kitty, for my sake"?

How could she see Glen? Still, it has to be confessed, that all through the voyage, Kitty had thought of what she should say to him if she did meet him. It would have been better, possibly, if Haliburton had not put the idea in her head. For, suddenly — as she walked toward the train for Paris, Glen was there. He was shaking hands with Mr. Willoughby, with Mrs. Willoughby, with Blanche, with Alice, even with little Jack; he was laughing and talking with Agatha Darrow; the only person in the whole party he had not observed was Kitty herself. Twice Glen had almost touched

her dress, but he had not yet glanced towards her. It was just as well perhaps, for, in spite of all the mental preparation, Kitty found the reality of meeting Glen, at least of hearing his voice and being conscious of his proximity, something quite different from her idea of it. Was it that the *mal de mer* still pursued her, that the planks beneath her feet suddenly seemed to rise at a right angle, — so that it was like walking up a steep roof? that when they paused before the open carriage-door an abyss had to be leaped before she could gain the step? In fact, the world was turning round to Kitty. She was sure of nothing until she presently found herself seated with her back to the engine, beside the window of a first-class carriage, opposite Mrs. Willoughby. Next to Mrs. Willoughby was Blanche who was still white and cadaverous from the voyage, and was being propped up with cushions by — by whom? By Glendenning Rennie, who was somehow established on the left of Kitty.

“You know,” he said to her presently, “I expect to catch the steamer at Cherbourg early tomorrow. But I am going almost as far as Paris with you.”

She did not reply.

“Suppose,” he said, after a little pause, “you were to take off that veil.”

The whisper reached only Kitty’s ear. Mrs. Willoughby, solicitous for Blanche, was feeding her with the essence of beef. Where were the others?

The carriage was full, but Agatha was not to be seen, nor Mr. Willoughby, nor Alice, nor Jack, nor the maid.

Kitty lifted the gray veil from her face. It was a compromise between her principles and comparative comfort. She could not, of course, obey Glen; still it was necessary to have a chance to breathe.

"Where are the others?" she inquired, with apparent nonchalance.

"What others? I feel as if there were nobody in the whole wide world save you and me."

Kitty, leaning forward, addressed Mrs. Willoughby and Blanche with suavity. Tempest-tossed and worn out as the two were, they were not in a mood for conversation, but she elicited the fact that the party had been obliged to divide as the carriages were so full. Kitty helped to make the ladies comfortable; she put her dressing-case under their feet, and drew down the blind. In five minutes Mrs. Willoughby, supporting Blanche's head on her shoulder, was, like her daughter, fast asleep. Practically it was as Glen had said, — he and Kitty were alone in the world. The other occupants of the carriage were strangers. Had he not planned it? Did he not know the good Mrs. Willoughby and the drowsy Blanche? Had he not hurried the alert Mr. Willoughby and Alice, not to say Agatha Darrow, into the other carriage?

Kitty had huddled into her corner.

"Look at me, Kitty," Glen said to her.

She lifted a white, woeful face. She had not really seen him before, — had only been conscious of his presence. He was so vividly, ardently alive, with his dark, imperious glance, his smiling lips, that she caught her breath.

“Have you forgotten me in these few weeks?” he demanded.

She hesitated before making any reply.

“What is it all about?” he asked, laying his hand on hers. “John cabled to me a week ago yesterday, ‘Meet Kitty, Havre 29th.’ I was utterly flabbergasted.”

“Flabbergasted?” repeated Kitty blankly. “What is that?”

“It is what a fellow feels when the girl he supposed to be safely at home, sewing her seam and reading her primer, suddenly begins to run around the world after him.”

“I had no idea you were in Europe — until — until a little while before we sailed,” said Kitty.

“You would n’t have thought of coming if you had known you were running into my arms?”

“No.”

“A few days after I had the dispatch a letter came from John,” Glen proceeded. He no longer smiled; he almost frowned instead. Her glance could not meet his. “He told me that you had not been quite on satisfactory terms with the marchesa, — that, against her wishes, you were coming to Paris to study art.”

He looked at her, waiting for an answer.

"Am I not to be reckoned with?" he demanded.

"No."

"What do you mean, Kitty?"

"Mamma can tell you." Kitty lifted her heavy eyelids, and looked him straight in the face.

"But it is from you I want to hear it. A little while ago, — in fact until now, — although a hint had come before, I did believe you loved me."

"You tell me that!" she said impetuously; "you dare to taunt me with it!"

"Kitty!" exclaimed Glen under his breath, absolutely aghast at her words and tone. But his hand still pressed hers as it lay on the folds of her dress. Let it flutter as it might, he would not let it go.

"Let us understand each other," he whispered in her ear. "I love you with all my heart and soul; I love you with the first real love of my life."

A little cry escaped her.

"Is it my unlucky book that has come between us?" he now asked. "Ever since John wrote, I have been puzzling my wits over the problem. Can it possibly be that" — He broke off. He saw at a glance that his suggestion came home to her. They exchanged a serious, thoughtful glance. He took out his watch, glanced at its face, then put it back in his pocket. "I have just forty-three minutes more with you," he said. "Then we part. I am not quite sure what you are thinking and feeling; but I wish to make it clear to you what is

in my mind. Will you try to listen? Will you dismiss prejudice? Will you be candid and just?"

She bowed her head.

"If I have treated you a little too much as a child — have I?" She looked at him silently. "It is not that I did not expect some time to be brought to book. Nobody but myself knows just how certain impulses have worked themselves out in me. The first time I ever saw your mother it was when she was a girl of fourteen or fifteen. She was distributing gifts from a Christmas-tree at Mrs. Ambury's, my great-grandmother's, in the room where we ate dinner last summer. She wore a red dress trimmed with white fur. I was an awkward, long-legged boy of twelve or thirteen. From that moment to this I have adored her. I adore her still, — I shall always adore her. I recall at this moment the way she advanced from the Christmas-tree and gave me a pair of skates. 'These are for you, I think,' she said, and smiled, just as she smiles now. I was ready to fall on my knees. From that day to this she has been just the same, — pure, magnificent, unapproachable. I was an imaginative boy, and she seemed necessary to my happiness. Years later, when I met her in Italy one summer, when you were six years old" —

"Do not tell me," murmured Kitty. "Please do not tell me."

He saw that her face was quivering.

"Either I must tell you everything, or you must forget it."

"I cannot forget it." She said this with passionate indignation.

When he saw the shudder that passed through her his impulse changed. He had believed that when he should tell Kitty the whole story of those nights when he used to walk up and down the seashore with the effervescence of all sorts of hopes and fears and longings in his heart and mind, the youthful ferment which hindered sleep and had somehow to be poured out in words, and finally crystallized into the sonnets of "Love Unfulfilled," — he had believed that Kitty, like himself, would be ready to smile at his sufferings, his folly, his incapacity for understanding that Constance was not for him nor he for her; that although he had needed to see her, to talk with, to listen to her, to feel that there was a tie between them, it was simply enthusiastic, youthful devotion, — no more. But the time for Kitty to understand this had not yet come.

"Kitty," he now said, "we will discuss this later, — say five years hence, — when we have been married long enough to have no illusions and no mistakes about each other."

"Never, never, never!" said Kitty impetuously.

"When you have found out that I love the marchesa very much the same way you love her, and when you know, know in every fibre of your being, that it is you I love with the only real love I ever felt in my whole life, — not with my intellect, not with my imagination, but with my heart and soul and body, — you will understand then why it was

that, although I have little enough to offer you except this love, you could not help taking up with me, because there exists between us an indissoluble bond of feeling. I do believe that you cannot help loving me, just as I cannot help loving you and wishing to live with you and having every sweet moment of your life, as it were, framed in mine. Of course I am not half good enough for you."

Her hand, until this moment turned palm downwards, suddenly slid round in Glen's, whose face and manner and tone had shown her that he wished to lay bare the quivering roots of all his feelings. His whole figure vibrated with emotion. She could not help responding.

"I think," he now said, with an agitated laugh, "that we may be married by this time next year."

"No, that cannot be, — it can never be," Kitty returned. "I am grateful for all you say, but it can never be."

He drew out his watch again.

"Just thirteen minutes before we reach Clichy where I must leave you. I must catch the train from Paris."

"Thirteen minutes!" Their eyes met.

"I never in my life heard such nonsense as your and Gatty's going to Paris to study art," he now observed. "Thank heaven it will amount to nothing very wonderful."

"I intend to work with all my heart and soul."

"Put your art between us, — between your love for me and mine for you?"

She nodded ; she almost smiled, then checked the unworthy impulse.

"Gatty said you would be a skeptical, scoffing critic ; would laugh at us, emphasize all our faults, and see no good in our work." Kitty said this in quite her usual voice and tone. "But we are going to believe in ourselves."

"There are ten thousand too many artists already," said Glen ; "but no matter. Go on and perpetrate more abominations. I shall write to you twice a week hereafter. Remember, Kitty, — no adventures !"

She listened with impatience.

He held his watch up to her.

"Five minutes and then no more until I come for you," he said.

Her head drooped.

"I shall see your mother," he whispered.

"What shall I tell her ?"

Kitty raised her head. "Tell her," she began, —

"Yes."

"Tell her — but no, not that" —

"What shall I tell her ?"

"Tell her" —

"Kitty, there are only twenty seconds."

She was silent, but looked at him with a curious pain and perplexity.

"We are parting, Kitty. Kitty, do you know that we are parting? What shall I tell your mother ?"

She drew a deep breath.

"You know," she faltered.

"I only know one thing and that is, that I love you, — that I have to leave you."

In another moment the train had stopped. Glen let himself out, but continued to stand on the platform gazing at Kitty with a look that gripped her heart. She pulled down her sash and leaned out.

"Tell her that I miss her every moment," she said.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOVE FULFILLED.

WHEN Glen gave Constance Kitty's message she said, —

“Oh, I do not doubt that Kitty loves me still, — she must inevitably miss me, but — she has gone away from me.”

“I do not think she is so far away but that I can bring her back,” said Glen. “I have given you a great deal of trouble in my life, Conny, but perhaps I may be able to atone for a little of it.”

Constance looked at him and smiled. The pallor and trouble of her face had communicated themselves to him. The pang of sympathy he felt had kindled strong feeling in his glance. As her eyes met his a sudden intuition darted with an electrical force through all her mental being, giving her a revelation of the future. Something of reverence, of chastened tenderness in his look and tone, showed Constance that she was now to him the mother of Kitty. And, on her side, she found in the man who loved Kitty and whom Kitty loved a worth, a dignity, a strength, she had never recognized in the old Glen Rennie. She who had expected to make Kitty's life for her found herself

powerless to arrest a destiny which was working itself out irresistibly. But, after all, she had desired only to make her child noble, and if Kitty had given Glen a new impulse and purpose in his life, why surely that was a reward.

The issues of a lifetime are not seldom decided in a moment, and in this moment Constance lived down her pang. It would no longer hurt her pride, her self-love, that she must trust Glen to do for her what she could not do for herself. She had said before that her renunciation was complete, — but it had not been. She had tried to reconcile herself to the inevitable. She did not complain. The house was ordered in just the old, pleasant way. John Haliburton came often and sometimes stayed long. Never was opportunity more propitious for a man to prove his devotion, but Haliburton had not ventured to speak another word of what lay close to his heart. “Here I am, at your orders,” his manner may have said to Constance’s womanly perceptions, but he and she and Richard Amory talked of business, gossip, politics, and the books they read, as if there were no nearer and dearer subject in the world.

Kitty wrote once a week to her mother and described hers and Gatty’s life. Glen wrote to her constantly but she had not answered his letters, so he told Constance. Glen was working hard and working well. He had told Kitty he should be able to have a wife by another year, and he asked her to find him one in Paris. She must have no

nonsense about her ; she must be domestic, not a bit of a Bohemian ; she must be delightfully pretty, and she must adore himself.

It was Constance who finally said to Kitty in one of her letters, "Why do you never write to Glen? He is wonderfully brightened and improved, but he works too hard, and I think he needs the refreshment of a word from you."

Kitty inclosed this note in the envelope containing a letter to her mother : —

PARIS, RUE DU BAC, February the tenth.

DEAR COUSIN GLEN, — Mamma says I may write to you, and I make use of the opportunity in order, at once, to thank you for your delightful and amusing letters, and to tell you that some of my work is very well spoken of, and that there seems a good prospect of my having a medal in the spring. It is very encouraging to me. So long as I was only tantalized by a hope that I possessed some originality I could not feel sure that I ought to devote myself to this career. But I am now determined. In spite of the short days I work almost ten hours. Gatty's eyes have troubled her of late, and she has been going out a good deal into society with the Willoughbys. I am always in bed before ten o'clock, and am, most affectionately and gratefully,

Your cousin,

CATERINA MARIA FRANCESCA BERTINI.

It was about ten days after Constance had forwarded this note to Glen that Miss Darrow called to see her. The Ambury Darrows had gone to their town house in December, and Constance had met them rarely. Sue now came out to tell the news of Agatha's engagement to Dr. Eugene Dow, Mr. Willoughby's nephew, who was studying surgery in Paris.

Constance received the announcement as if she were stunned. She had all the time been dreading lest she should receive some tidings of a fresh problem in Kitty's conduct, and her imagination at once galloped away towards some possible lover for her child.

"I came to tell you," Sue now explained, "because Gatty wrote that Kitty was very unhappy about the affair; feels that it is a lowering of ideals, — accepting mere humdrum and commonplace. Gatty said, in fact, that she rather doubted whether Kitty would condescend to speak of it at all."

"She has not," Constance said, with a wistful, anxious face. "What difference will it make in Agatha's plans?"

"They will be married here in June probably — perhaps a little later. He will have finished his courses in May. It seems so wonderful to us all that there is to be a wedding in the family," Sue went on. "Eugene Dow is not a great hero, but I think there must be a vast amount of romance in us all hitherto latent. We go round hugging

and kissing one another, and poppa is so excited he has to entrust all the business to John Haliburton." Sue paused, looked at Constance with an intense, steady gaze. "Conny Amory," she demanded, after she had made the pause impressive, "why don't you marry John Haliburton and put him out of his misery?"

"Must everybody be married because Agatha is?" said Constance, smiling and coloring.

"You are a regular dog in the manger," Sue persisted. "You will neither make him happy yourself, nor let another woman make him happy."

Sue got herself away as soon as possible after this outburst, which embarrassed her almost as much as it embarrassed Constance. She left the latter with a good deal to reflect upon. What was to become of Kitty in Paris? Was there actually to be a career? A quick spring in her veins for some sort of action sent her thoughts traveling. She needed movement, she needed out-of-door air to still the unrest within her. It was a cold, windy March day; threatening clouds had hung lowering, but neither rain nor snow had fallen. Now towards night a golden ring ran across the west. She wrapped her fur-lined cloak about her shoulders, put a little cap of fur on her head, thrust her bare hands into a muff, and ran out for a turn on the terrace. She had not taken ten steps before she met Haliburton. She put her hand on his coat-sleeve.

"Oh John," she said, "I wanted to see you."

Haliburton kissed her on the lips as she lifted her eager face.

"You know what I told you," he murmured. "The moment you call me John I have gone raving mad."

Constance wrote to Kitty that night that she felt more than a little foolish in confessing that she was about to make a third marriage; but that when Mr. Haliburton had insisted, she had not the strength of mind to contradict him.

"Mr. Haliburton has been attached to me a good many years," Constance went on; "and his affection has that satisfying quality about it which makes me feel that nobody has quite loved and believed in me before. I suppose I love him. But that is not the point. The point is that I can put my hands in his and say, 'Think for me, choose for me: I trust in you absolutely.'"

"Accordingly, he has decided everything. He and your uncle Richard, that is, — for I find that my brother has hoped that I should marry Mr. Haliburton. Although the arrangement is only a few hours old, all is settled, cut and dried. We are to be married on Easter Tuesday, and sail for Europe the next day. Not only Mr. Haliburton and I, but your uncle Richard is going with us. He says he wants Kitty to take him to Fontainebleau Forest. We have sent word to Glen of what has happened, and await, with some expectation of being amused, what he will say."

Kitty had read her mother's letter, stirred to the very depths of feeling. She recognized on the instant, with an acuteness of perception which showed her the whole truth as by a lightning flash, that she had been wrong-headed, wicked, cruel. She fell on her knees. "Oh mamma, mamma," she cried, "forgive me, oh forgive me!" Then in the silence she whispered, "Oh God, forgive me and make mamma forgive me!"

She was all alone; Gatty was away, would not be back for hours. There was no one to whom Kitty could speak. The thoughts, sensations, feelings, pent up within her had to overflow, not in words, but in self-communings which penetrated, which investigated, which illumined. Kitty needed just this silence, this solitude, this intense personal conviction of the wrong she had done her mother. The scathing condemnation which she now passed on herself for her own selfish preoccupation was, perhaps, a little exaggerated; but it was necessary to swing as far to the right as she had swung to the left to balance at the imperious point of duty. The only trouble was that she could not resist feeling happy. Something seemed to burst asunder in her mind; she had regained freedom, joy, hope.

She had received two letters. One she had not yet opened. She hardly dared open it. It was from Glen. Her heart beat; her ardent southern face flamed with warm color. She put the seal to her lips, she gazed hungrily at the superscription. Why should she dread to open it? Surely she

need not torment herself. She cut the envelope, then, reading the first lines, she laughed aloud. This was Glen's letter : —

NEW YORK, 11th March, 189-.

MY OWN LITTLE KITTY, — Is it not the most wonderful, the most delightful, the most proper, the most inevitable, thing that ever happened in the world, — the most unexpected, the most incredible, the most unheard of, the most to be wished, the most to be desired, the most to be thankful for? And to think of my blindness! I see clearly now that I was a chuckle-headed idiot not to have known it all the time. I have said to Conny more than once that she ought to have married John, and I meant it, only I saw it in the abstract; it is only now that I accept its possibility in the concrete. I'm so perfectly enchanted to have my dear old John happy. Then, too, I'm perfectly enchanted to have the marchesa happy. For John has the trick; he'll make her the happiest woman she ever was yet.

But, my dear Signorina Caterina Maria Francesca Bertini, if you suppose I am going to look on and see all the rest of the world happy and be myself lonely and miserable, you little understand me. I'll give them three days with you, then I shall arrive by the French steamer. When I arrive, you and I will go out shopping in the Rue de la Paix and buy an engagement ring. The next day we will go and buy the sweetest little trousseau for my bride, — all the charming fluffy things Paris can furnish.

Then, for the third and last time, we'll go out and buy a wedding-ring for the prettiest little finger in the world, belonging to the hand that I adore, that I kiss, that I claim. No more to-day.

Yours forever,

GLEN.



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